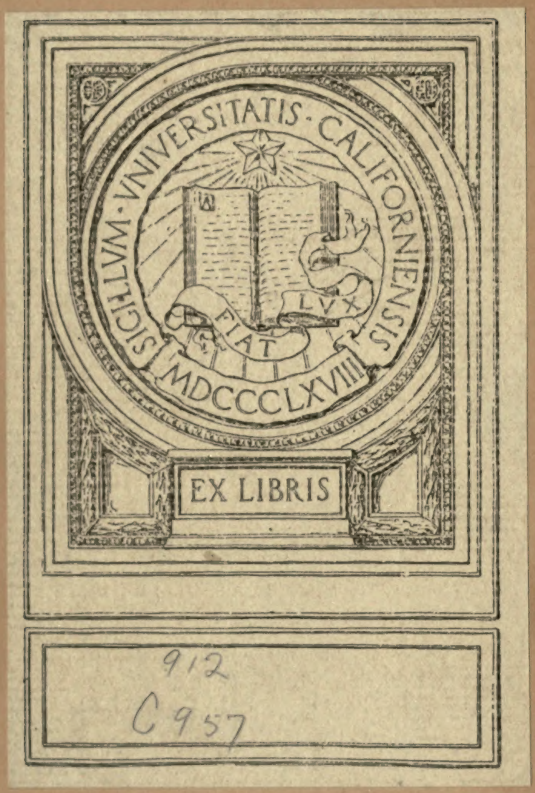

SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

912
C957

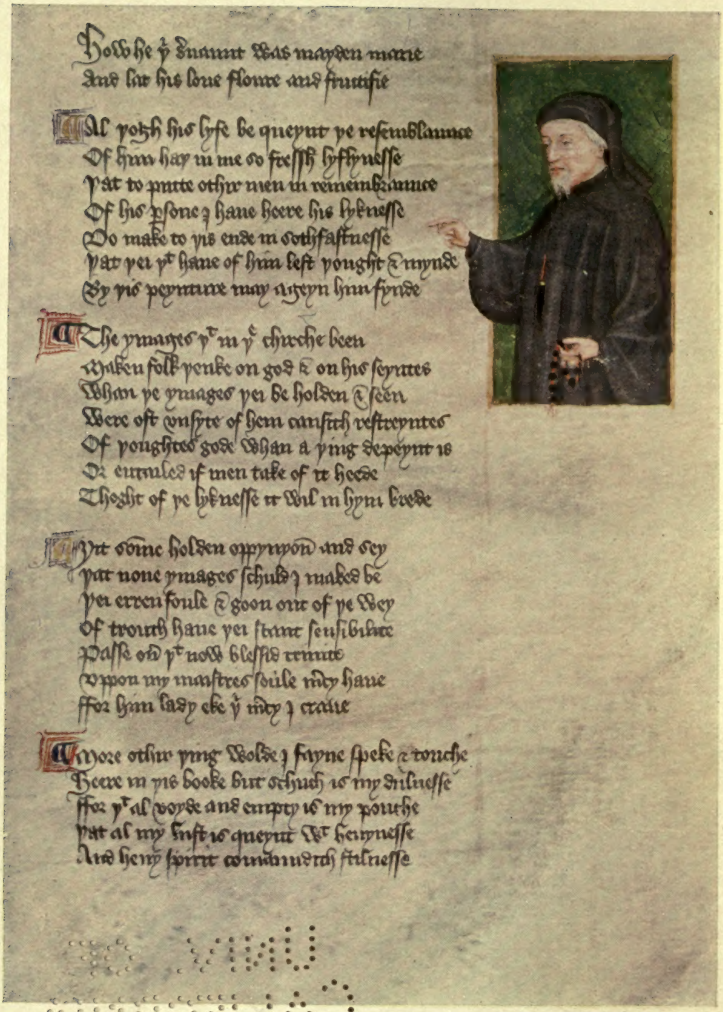
Bacon
198

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/englishliteratur00crusrich

ENGLISH LITERATURE THROUGH THE AGES

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



How he ye dnaunt was mayden marie
And lat his loue floure and fructifie

Al yotzh his lyfe be queynt ye resemblaunce
Of him hay in me so fressh lyflynesse
Yat to putte othir men in remembraunce
Of his psone ꝛ haue heere his lyknesse
Do make to yis ende in sothfastnesse
Yat yei yt haue of him left yought ⁊ mynde
By yis peynture may ageyn him fynde

The ymages yt in ye chirche been
Maken folk yenke on god ⁊ on his seyntes
Whan ye ymages yei be holden ⁊ seen
Were oft vnsyte of hem cansith restreyntes
Of youghtes gode whan a ying depeynt is
Or entailed if men take of it heede
Thoght of ye lyknesse it wil in hym brede

Yit some holden oppynyon and sey
Yat none ymages schuld ꝛ makes be
Yei erren foule ⁊ goon out of ye wey
Of trouth haue yei stant sensibilite
Passe on yt now blessid trinite
Vppon my maistres soule mercy haue
Ffor him lady eke ye mercy ꝛ craue

More othir ying wolde ꝛ fayne speke ⁊ touche
Heere in yis booke but schuch is my dulnesse
Ffor yt al voyde and empty is my pouche
Yat al my lust is queynt wt heynesse
And heny spirit comanndith stilnesse

Fr. **The Authentic Portrait of Chaucer**

From MS. of Thomas Occleve's Poem, *De regimine Principum*, in the British Museum. (Early XVth Century)

ENGLISH LITERATURE THROUGH THE AGES

BEOWULF TO STEVENSON

BY AMY CRUSE

Author of "Elizabethan Lyrists and their Poetry" etc.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

9R
C957

PRINTED AT
THE BALLANTYNE PRESS
LONDON ENGLAND

PREFACE

THIS book aims at telling the story of English literature through the stories of individual books. Minor writers and minor literary movements have been disregarded altogether, and space has thus been gained for a fuller treatment of the selected works, which have been chosen in the first place because they are great literary masterpieces, and in the second because each is representative of a particular period, a certain class of writers, or a common literary tendency. Of these books the author has told the story in considerable detail, aiming at making each appear to her readers as a living reality, not merely a constituent part of a great whole known as English literature. She has hoped by so doing to set up along the road that must be travelled a series of bright lights, which, although they do not form a perfectly continuous line, and although they do not mark every winding and every change of level, yet do show the main features and general outline of the road, and do reveal it as a fair and pleasant path along which those who have once travelled will be willing to return again and again, exploring by-paths and finding new beauties.

This plan naturally excludes much of what is ordinarily found in histories of English literature, but at the same time care has been taken that no essential should be neglected. A few introductory or connecting notes have been added to certain chapters where the continuity is not clear, but for the most part the writer has relied upon the connexion naturally

295353

established between the chapters in the course of the story. Each chapter is, in a sense, complete in itself, though threads pass from one to another, weaving them all into one connected whole.

The book is not designed as a substitute for the actual text of the works dealt with; where it is not practicable to read those in their entirety such selections from them as are provided by Mrs. E. L. Elias in *English Literature in Prose and Verse* will be found useful.

A. CRUSE

CONTENTS

BOOK ONE

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Introductory Note	15
I.	Beowulf	17
II.	Cædmon's Paraphrase	26
III.	The Exeter Book	33
IV.	Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English Race	39
V.	The English Chronicle	45

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

	Introductory Note	49
VI.	The Chronica Majora of Matthew Paris	53
VII.	Pearl : Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight	61
VIII.	The Vision of Piers Plowman	68
IX.	The Canterbury Tales	75
X.	Wiclif's Bible	87
XI.	The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Mandeville	93

THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD

	Introductory Note	99
XII.	Utopia	103

CHAPTER PAGE

XIII. Tindale's Bible 114
XIV. Euphues : the Anatomie of Wit 119
XV. The Sonnets of Sir Philip Sidney 127
XVI. Dr. Faustus : Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay 133
XVII. The Faerie Queene 143
XVIII. The Plays of Shakespeare 154
XIX. England's Helicon 172
XX. Hakluyt's Voyages 180
XXI. Ecclesiastical Polity 187

FROM THE DEATH OF ELIZABETH TO THE RESTORATION

Introductory Note 195
XXII. The Advancement of Learning 197
XXIII. The Alchemist 205
XXIV. The Temple 214
XXV. The Hesperides 222

THE RESTORATION PERIOD

Introductory Note 231
XXVI. Paradise Lost 233
XXVII. Absalom and Achitophel 247
XXVIII. The Pilgrim's Progress 255

CONTENTS

BOOK TWO

THE AUGUSTAN AGE

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Introductory Note	265
XXIX.	The Tatler : The Spectator	267
XXX.	The Rape of the Lock : The Essay on Man	283
XXXI.	Robinson Crusoe	293
XXXII.	The Journal to Stella : Gulliver's Travels	300
XXXIII.	The Seasons	315

LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

	Introductory Note	319
XXXIV.	Pamela : Joseph Andrews	321
XXXV.	Johnson's Dictionary : The Lives of the Poets	333
XXXVI.	The Vicar of Wakefield	343
XXXVII.	The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire	354
XXXVIII.	Evelina	362
XXXIX.	The Task	372
XL.	The Poems of Robert Burns	384

EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

	Introductory Note	395
XLI.	The Lyrical Ballads	397

CHAPTER PAGE

XLII. Byron's Childe Harold : Shelley's Lyrics 412
XLIII. Endymion 430
XLIV. Pride and Prejudice 440
XLV. The Lay of the Last Minstrel : Waverley 448
XLVI. The Essays of Elia 457

THE VICTORIAN AGE

Introductory Note 469
XLVII. Vanity Fair 471
XLVIII. David Copperfield 479
XLIX. Jane Eyre 490
L. Scenes of Clerical Life 502
LI. Sartor Resartus 512
LII. Modern Painters 523
LIII The Idylls of the King 533
LIV. Bells and Pomegranates : Aurora Leigh 544
LV. Thyrsis : Culture and Anarchy 556
LVI. Kidnapped : Catriona 565

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE AUTHENTIC PORTRAIT OF CHAUCER *Frontispiece*

PAGE

A FRAGMENT OF THE MS. OF "BEOWULF" 22

A SCRIBE WRITING 30

"THE EXETER BOOK" 36

A PAGE FROM MS. OF BEDE'S "ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY" 40

A PAGE FROM MS. OF "THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE" 46

A PAGE FROM MS. OF "CHRONICA MAJORA" 54

AN ILLUMINATION FROM MS. OF "PEARL" 62

AN ILLUMINATION FROM MS. OF "SIR GAWAYNE" 66

A PAGE FROM MS. OF "PIERS PLOWMAN" 72

CHAUCER READING TO EDWARD III 80

JOHN WICLIF 88

SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE 94

PILGRIMS SETTING OUT 96

CAXTON SHOWING THE FIRST SPECIMEN OF HIS PRINTING TO EDWARD IV 100

SIR THOMAS MORE 110

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY 128

ILLUSTRATION TO "DR. FAUSTUS" 138

EDMUND SPENSER 144

UNA AND THE FAUNES AND SATYRS 150

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE AND ANN HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE 156

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE 160

THE GLOBE THEATRE IN 1613 166

ENGLISH LITERATURE

	PAGE
THE SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE	170
RALEIGH : THE EARL OF SURREY : DRAYTON	176
BISHOPSBOURNE CHURCH	192
SIR FRANCIS BACON	198
BEN JONSON	206
GEORGE HERBERT	216
ROBERT HERRICK	224
MILTON'S MULBERRY TREE	236
JOHN MILTON	244
JOHN DRYDEN	250
JOHN BUNYAN	258
SIR RICHARD STEELE	268
JOSEPH ADDISON	278
ALEXANDER POPE	286
FRONTISPIECE TO "ROBINSON CRUSOE"	294
JONATHAN SWIFT	306
SAMUEL RICHARDSON	322
DR. JOHNSON IN THE HEBRIDES	338
GOLDSMITH AT LISSOY	344
EDWARD GIBBON	356
FANNY BURNEY	364
WILLIAM COWPER	374
ROBERT BURNS	386
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE	398
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH	406
LORD BYRON	414
SHELLEY WRITING THE DEDICATION OF "THE REVOLT OF ISLAM"	422
JOHN KEATS	432
JANE AUSTEN	442

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
SIR WALTER SCOTT	450
CHARLES LAMB	460
WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY	472
CHARLES DICKENS	482
CHARLOTTE BRONTË	492
GEORGE ELIOT	50
THOMAS CARLYLE	51
JOHN RUSKIN	526
LORD TENNYSON	534
ROBERT BROWNING	546
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING	550
MATTHEW ARNOLD	558
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON	566

BOOK ONE

The Anglo-Saxon Period

THE history of this period is only gradually being written. Modern research is discovering old manuscripts that have lain hidden for ages, and is throwing fresh light on others that have been little regarded. But already we possess enough specimens of our early literature to enable us to make broad general statements as to its nature and the circumstances under which it was written.

The greater part of our early literature is in verse. Anglo-Saxon verse has certain definite characteristics which distinguish it from the verse of any other period. Its metre is quite unlike the metre of modern English verse, and does not depend upon the number of syllables contained in each line. The lines are divided into halves by means of a pause, and each half line contains two accented syllables. There is no rhyme in Anglo-Saxon verse. Instead, there is studied alliteration, which forms an important element in the metrical structure; the two accented syllables in the first half of the line, and one of the accented syllables of the second half begin with the same letter. This is the rule, though there are many variations.

The prose written during the Anglo-Saxon period is meagre in quantity and of small literary value. The *English Chronicle*, a few prefaces and translations by Alfred the Great, a collection of homilies and addresses—these are all the specimens we possess. Bede, we know, translated the Gospel of St. John into the English tongue, but no copy of his work has come down to us.

After the death of Bede his work was carried on by his pupils. One of these founded the great school at York, to

which, for more than sixty years, students from all parts of Europe came for the teaching that was unattainable in their own countries. From York scholars went to the court of Charlemagne at Paris, and founded there the great schools that became the glory of his Empire. Scarcely had they left England when a fresh incursion of the Danes into Northumbria took place; whole districts were laid waste, and instead of a centre of learning and culture, Northumbria became for many years a region of desolation and ruin.

In the ninth century the efforts of Alfred the Great created a new centre of learning in the south, but after his death it almost immediately declined. The latter half of the tenth century brought the peaceful and prosperous reign of King Edgar. The monastic revival which resulted from the efforts of Dunstan set up a much higher standard of culture among the clergy. The English schools once more became famous, and it is to this period that the homilies which have before been mentioned belong. Fresh incursions of the Danes, which led to the establishment of the Danish rule in 1013, once more set England in turmoil. Literature died out, and did not again revive until long after the Norman Conquest.

CHAPTER I

BEOWULF

IN the Manuscript Room of the British Museum there is a small parchment book of one hundred and forty pages, old and worn and discoloured. It has evidently suffered from fire, for its edges are charred and broken, and there are holes in some of the leaves. It is written in the clear beautiful hand which the Irish monks introduced into England during the seventh century; its language is the West Saxon form of Old English. There is no attempt at illumination or ornament, except that the capital letters beginning a fresh division of the poem are larger and blacker than the others. In recent years the book has been carefully and skilfully bound, and the edges of each page protected with strips of parchment; for its importance as a unique and priceless literary treasure has at last been recognized. If one of the chances of its long and adventurous existence had brought it to destruction, and it had never reached its safe resting-place in the British Museum we should have lost the most important part of the first chapter in the history of our literature. We should, besides, have lost our most valuable witness to the manner of life our ancestors led in those far-off days, to their spirit and temper, and to the aims and ideals which they set before themselves. For this is the only copy known to be in existence of the old Anglo-Saxon epic, *Beowulf*.

Beowulf stands for us as a type of the stories our ancestors loved. It tells of fierce fighting and hand-to-hand encounters, of strange and terrible beasts whose lair is in "fearsome halls" under the sea, or in fiery caverns on the high heath. Mighty deeds of valour are done as man and monster face each other

in the midnight darkness, or as the "fierce-flaming breath" of the fiery dragon "springeth far and wide." The hero of the story is young, handsome, brave, and nobly born, cool in the midst of danger, high-hearted when disaster comes, modest in victory. English literature has given us many such heroes since the time of Beowulf; he stands the first of a long line which reaches on even to our own day.

Briefly outlined the story is this. Hrothgar, king of the Scyldings, built a great and magnificent hall which he called Heorot. In the night a monster—half man, half beast—named Grendel, entered the hall, and carried off thirty thanes. Similar attacks, constantly renewed, filled Hrothgar's kingdom with mourning. The news reached Beowulf, the Geat, who took ship, came to the land of the Scyldings, and offered his services to Hrothgar to rid him of the fiend. That night Grendel came as before, but was seized by Beowulf, who struggled with him until the monster, mortally wounded, fled away, leaving his arm and shoulder in the grip of Beowulf. Great was the rejoicing, but sorrow was renewed, when, during the following night, the mother of Grendel, came to avenge her son. She carried off Hrothgar's favourite thane, Æschere. The news was told to Beowulf, who at once started to find the lair of the monster. He descended to the bottom of the sea where he found a roofed hall, the home of Grendel's mother. Beowulf wrestled with and overcame her, cut off her head and returned with it to land. Hrothgar gave him great rewards and he went back with glory to his home.

The next adventure took place when Beowulf had succeeded to the throne of the Geats and had reigned for fifty years. Then the kingdom began to be troubled by a fire-drake, who guarded a huge treasure in a stone barrow on the heath. Beowulf sought him out in his lair, and after a fierce encounter, killed him, but died himself from the poison of a wound given him by the dragon.

Interest in the *Beowulf* manuscript was first aroused about a hundred years ago, and since that time it has been closely studied by scholars and experts. Several theories with regard

to its date and origin have been put forward, and the known facts of its history have been supplemented by surmises based upon its language, its style, its story, the allusions it contains, and other internal marks. To give anything like an authoritative account of the poem is, therefore, impossible; but by reasoning upon the conclusions which research has up to the present time established, it is possible to sketch out the lines upon which its inception and growth have probably proceeded.

The races that dwelt in Northern Europe round about the shores of the Baltic Sea seem, at some time during those ages which lie behind history, to have evolved for themselves a religion that was really a nature mythology. By means of this they accounted for the creation of the world, light and darkness, summer and winter, and all the operations of Nature. It is probable that the story of Beowulf had its ultimate origin in one of the myths so formed. In those wild, marshy, sea-girt regions, winter was a time of dread. Its furious storms turned the sea into a devouring monster "greedy and dark of mood"; its treacherous fogs, like "a dark death shadow," "night after night held the murky moors." But the short, bright summer came at last, drove away darkness and terror, and brought joyful relief. These facts the old Teutonic races represented in primitive and picturesque fashion. They conceived winter as a terrible monster, strong, cruel, fierce, and cunning, and kindly summer as a beneficent deity who grappled with this enemy and finally overthrew him. So a nature myth was formed, and soon distinct personalities were given to its characters. In some of the old Scandinavian records we find that the god of summer days is called Beowa, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that his name has some connexion with the name of the hero of the poem we are considering.

The myth grew, as we know myths did grow among all the early peoples. Episode after episode was added. The wild gloomy nature of a great part of the country—the desolate fens, the coast wrapped in mirk and mist, the sea dark and

treacherous—had a stern influence upon the imagination of the men who inhabited it. They peopled the land and the sea with creatures dire and terrible—sea-wolves and fire-drakes, "many of the dragon kind breathing fire," nickers or water spirits, eotens—loathly giants half human and half beast. All these Beowa must conquer, and the warlike spirit of our fathers loved to dwell on the details of the struggle, the fierce hand-to-hand grapple, the hard blows given and received. Their minstrels or 'scops'—the 'smiths of song'—fashioned the story into verse and sang it to eager listeners gathered round the winter fire in the hall of some great king or chieftain.

As we approach the sixth century and records grow a little clearer, the story begins to connect itself with historic fact. Hygelac, king of the Geats, Beowulf's liege lord, has been identified with Chochilaicus mentioned in the Latin history of Gregory of Tours. Between the years 512 and 520 Gregory tells us, at the time when the advance of the Saxons in England had been for the time stopped through the exertions of the Britons under the renowned King Arthur, Chochilaicus made a raid upon the Frisian shore. His band had worked great havoc, plundering and slaying all around, and were carrying their spoil back to the ships when a force sent by the Frankish king overtook and conquered them. Chochilaicus was killed, and the spoil recovered. Reference is made to this raid several times in *Beowulf*. "Hygelac," we are told, "came faring with a fleet to the Frisians' land, when the Hetware humbled him in battle, speedily attained through greater might, that the armed warrior must bow him to his fall. He fell in the midst of his fighting bands." And again, "They slew Hygelac, son of Hrethel, when in Friesland in storm of battle, the king of the Geats, gracious lord of his people, died of the sword-drink, struck down by the war-blade."

Historical originals have also been found for several of the other characters of the poem, including Beowulf himself. Scandinavian tradition preserves the memory of a thane of Hygelac's, Bothvari Biarki, whose story bears, in some points,

a marked resemblance to the story of the hero of the poem. It seems probable, therefore, that a thane of this period became famous among his countrymen for his victorious encounters with the wild beasts that infested the land, as well as for his prowess in battle. Lays were sung in his honour, his deeds were magnified, and he became a popular hero. In process of time the resemblance between his story and the myth of Beowa brought about a fusion of the two, and the hero of this composite tale emerged with all the characteristic and attractive human qualities of the warrior and the supernatural attributes of the god added thereto.

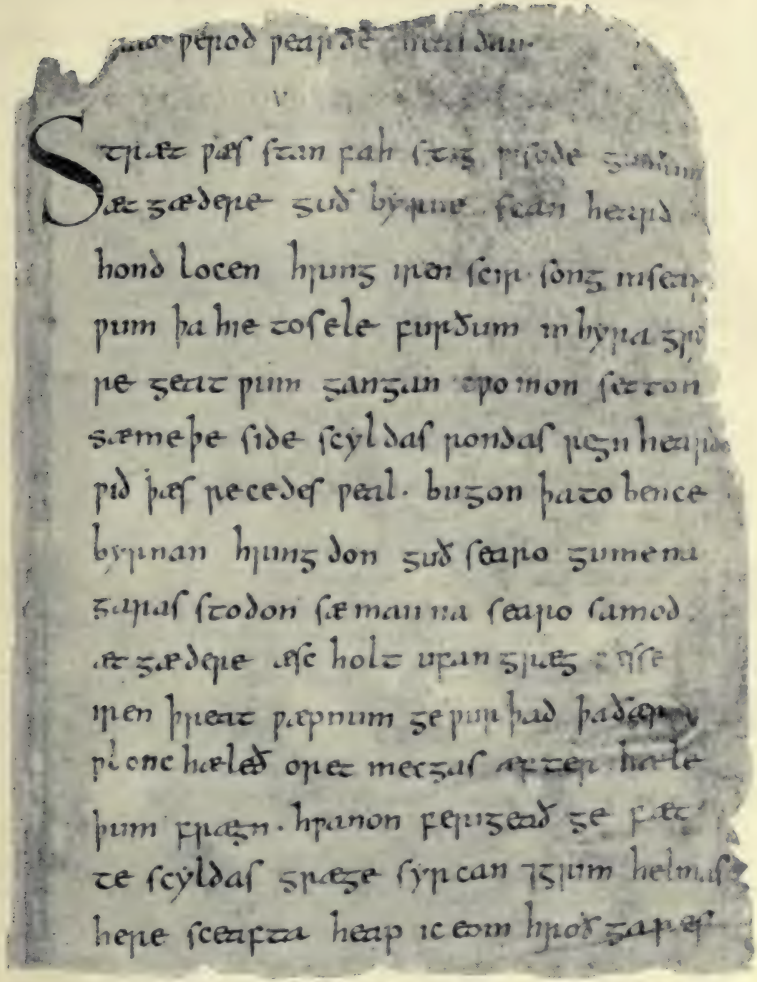
In this new form the story again became subject to alterations and additions. At that time stories of great deeds were spread abroad over the land, and passed from one generation to another by means of the songs of the minstrels. In these songs several unconnected incidents were often united to form one story, and as the names of the various heroes died out of the memories of the people the scops freely attributed their deeds to favourite legendary characters. In this way it is possible that Beowulf has been credited with heroic actions and gallant words which really belong to forgotten worthies of his race.

At what time or by what means the story came to England we are not certain. Some scholars think that the Geats, over whom Beowulf ruled, were a Low German tribe, related to the Anglo-Saxons. In that case the minstrels of the tribe would naturally have carried their lays to our country some time during the years occupied by the Saxon conquest of Britain. Other scholars believe the Geats to have been Scandinavians or Danes, and think that it was during the Danish raids and settlements of the ninth and tenth centuries that the poem was introduced. However that may be, introduced it was, not in any written form, but by means of the lays held in the memories of the scops. In its new home it soon, we may believe, stood as high in favour as it had done in the farther North. Its wild and warlike tone suited the spirit of the conquerors, even when, as the years passed by

they gradually settled down to peaceable occupations, and adopted Christianity. Yet still their pulses would stir and their hearts glow at a tale of some grim and mighty combat, where, by sheer valour of heart and strength of limb the victory was gained. So *Beowulf* lived on, sung by the scops, and applauded by their hearers at feast and revel.

There may have been several versions of the poem, each differing widely from the others, for by this time many hands had been at work on it, altering and revising it according to individual taste. It is significant, however, that no allusions to any national event that took place later than the first half of the sixth century are introduced. Also, all the descriptive passages apply to the scenery and natural features of the countries bordering the Baltic Sea. The site of Hrothgar's great hall, Heorot, is almost certainly the little village of Leire on the island of Zealand. It is evident, therefore, that the story underwent no fundamental alteration after it came to England.

The chief changes that this period witnessed were due to the religion of the country. The poem, as we have it now, shows a very curious mixture of pagan and Christian elements. The general tone is undoubtedly pagan and there are allusions to pagan beliefs and pagan ceremonies. But throughout the poem are scattered lines and passages, many of them of great beauty, which are distinctly Christian in character. "The Almighty," sang the scop in the hall of Heorot, "framed the world, the plain bright in beauty which the waters encircle, and, glorying in his handiwork, set the sun and moon to lighten the earth-dwellers, and decked the corners of the earth with boughs and leaves, and gave life to every kind of creature that walks alive." Nothing could be more opposed to the pagan conception of the creation of the world than this passage. The introduction of such sentiments was a natural result of the lay being sung by minstrels who were, nominally, at least, Christians. Their knowledge of the doctrines of their religion was probably of the most elementary kind, and the mixture of pagan and Christian sentiments which strikes modern readers as incon-



A Fragment of the MS. of "Beowulf"
In the British Museum

gruous, did not appear strange to them. How far their work extended we do not know, but it seems probable that to these singers of the lay some, at least, of the Christian interpolations are due.

At last the time came when the poem was written down. In the tenth century (so much the language of the manuscript indicates) a copyist, who was probably a monk, undertook the work.

The north of England was at this period the great home of learning, and it is believed that the first copy of *Beowulf* was made in a Northumbrian monastery. Who the copyist was that did this great service to his country, and under whose orders he worked we do not know. Whether he found the poem ready to his hand, or whether he brought together several separate lays and combined them into the *Beowulf* as we have it now can only be a matter of conjecture. Perhaps he was attracted to the story by some fighting instinct in himself, either inherited or surviving from a warlike youth before he left the turbulence of the world for the quiet of the cloister; perhaps he felt something of the old joy of battle revive as he wrote down the minstrel's words. But he would realize that, as a follower of the White Christ, he must try to conquer this feeling, and it may be that, partly as a result of this consciousness, he tried to give to the old pagan epic some transforming touches which should cause it to redound to the honour and glory of God.

Many copies of the original manuscript were probably made, and in this new form *Beowulf* again went on its way through the country. All the copies have perished or remain still hidden, saving only that which is now treasured in the British Museum. A close examination of the text of this has led scholars to the belief that the poem was first written in the Northern or Midland dialect, and then copied out in West Saxon, the dialect of the south.

To a monastery in the south of England, therefore, this manuscript probably belonged. It would appear that at some time or other it was subjected to revision, for there are

interpolations and alterations to be distinguished, obviously written in a different ink from that used in the original work. But for long years it probably lay unnoticed on a shelf in the monastery library along with many other manuscripts which the diligence of the copyists belonging to the establishment had produced. After the Norman Conquest there was little demand for poems of the character of *Beowulf*. The minstrels sang softer ditties, of which the main theme was love, and when warfare was described it was the warfare of chivalry not of the rough Teutons. For a time the glory of the older literature was eclipsed.

During the five centuries that followed the Conquest, the Church passed through times of danger and times of triumph, and each monastery had its chequered history. But the manuscript of the Saxon monk seems to have remained on some remote shelf, undisturbed. At last, in the sixteenth century came the dissolution of the monasteries, and the scattering of their treasures. Many manuscripts were lost, many were destroyed or defaced. Many, we know, from discoveries made since, were used in the binding of new books. Some were employed for purposes still more ignoble. Men used them, Bishop Bale tells us, "some to scour their candlesticks, and some to rub their boots. Some they sold to the grocers and soap-sellers, and some over sea to the bookbinders, not in small number, but at times whole ships full, to the wondering of the foreign nations."

Some, however, were recovered by the efforts of munificent friends of learning who knew the value of the treasure that had been so roughly treated. Among these was Sir Robert Bruce Cotton (born 1571). He made a diligent search for the scattered manuscripts, hunting them out from the most unlikely hiding-places, and he managed to recover a large number, which included the copy of *Beowulf*. These formed the foundation of the famous library since known by his name. His son and grandson made large additions to the library, and it was handed over to the State for public use in 1702. In 1730 the books were removed to Ashburnham House, Westminster. Here,

in the following year, a fire broke out, which seriously damaged many invaluable manuscripts. Among them was the *Beowulf* MS. Fortunately, however, parchment resists very strongly the action of fire. A few holes were burnt in the latter pages of the book, but the chief damage consisted in the charring of the edges of the leaves, which rendered them so brittle that a considerable part has since crumbled away, carrying with it letters and even words of the poem. For a time the manuscripts were sheltered in the old dormitory at Westminster, but in 1753 they were transferred to the British Museum. Here the value of the *Beowulf* MS. was discovered by the scholars who had access to it, and on their representations, the authorities took steps to arrest the process of destruction set up by the fire. It is now treasured with the care that befits its value as the only known copy of the first English epic.

CHAPTER II

CÆDMON'S PARAPHRASE

ON the wildest and stormiest part of the Yorkshire coast, where the River Esk flows out between two great headlands to the sea, there grew up in the early part of the seventh century a small hamlet. Groups of fishermen's huts stood on the margin of the beach, and were scattered over the lower slopes of the cliff which rose darkly behind the little bay. A winding road led to the rounded and grass-covered headland above, and passed on over green slopes, still ascending, until it reached the edge of a great moor. Here, in 657, Hild, a daughter of the royal house of Northumbria, built her famous monastery. The monastery, like the hamlet, was at first called Streoneshalh, but two hundred years after its foundation both received from the Danes the name which they now bear—Whitby.

Northumbria was at this time chief among the Saxon kingdoms. After a long period of struggle it had attained at last to the overlordship of the country, and, after Oswy's victory over Mercia in 655, it enjoyed a short period of peace and prosperity. Christianity had been introduced into Northumbria from Kent about 627, but in the struggle for the overlordship of the country the new religion had been forgotten, and almost all traces of it had disappeared. It was reintroduced by missionaries from Ireland. These brought with them something more than the doctrines of Christianity. They brought the fire, enthusiasm, and passion which at that time distinguished the Celtic Church ; they brought the ardent love of learning which seemed in those troubled days to have died out save in remote and unmolested Ireland. The whole-

hearted devotion of such men as Columba and Aidan, the beauty of their lives and the fervour of their preaching kindled the imagination and stirred the hearts of the Northumbrians. A wave of religious enthusiasm passed over the country. Men and women were eager to dedicate their lives to the service of God ; kings and nobles gave large gifts of land and money to the church, and monasteries began to rise in all parts of the kingdom.

Of these the monastery of Streoneshalh quickly became the richest and most famous. Much of its renown was due to Hild, its founder and first abbess. Her figure, though history shows it to us but dimly, has a large and simple grandeur suited to the scenes in which she worked. She was the mother of her monastery, known and revered by its humblest members ; she was the counsellor of kings and of bishops ; she was the wise and saintly teacher, to whom came a crowd of scholars eager to learn the lore of the Christian life. Many men and women who afterward became famous studied at that grey monastery beside the Northumbrian sea. Ethelfleda, daughter of King Oswy, spent almost all her life within its walls, and throughout England during the next generation there were priests and bishops who had been Hild's scholars. But the fame of these has faded, and their names are almost forgotten ; not one of the wealthy, high-born and learned inmates of the monastery has given to it half the renown which has come from one of its humblest servants—a cowherd named Cædmon, who is the first of the English poets.

We know nothing of the life of Cædmon except what Bede tells us in his *Ecclesiastical History*, written about fifty years later.

" In the monastery of this abbess," he says, " was a certain brother especially marked by Divine grace since he was wont to make songs suited to religion and piety, so that whatever he had learnt from the Divine writings through interpreters, this he in a little while produced in poetical expressions composed with the greatest harmony and accuracy, in his own tongue, that is, in that of the Angles. By his songs the

minds of many were excited to contemn the world, and desire the celestial life. And, indeed, others also after him in the nation of the Angles attempted to compose religious poems, but none could equal him. For he himself did not learn the art of poetry from men, or by being instructed by man; but, being divinely assisted, received gratuitously the gift of singing, on which account he never could compose any frivolous or idle poem, but those only which pertain to religion suited his religious tongue. For having lived in the secular habit unto the time of advanced age, he had never learned anything of singing. Whence, sometimes at a feast, when it was determined for the sake of mirth that all should sing in order, he, when he saw the harp approaching him, used to rise in the midst of supper, and, having gone out, walk back to his home.

"Which when he was doing on a time, and, having left the house of entertainment, had gone out to the stables of the beasts of burden, the care of which was entrusted to him on that night, and there, at the proper hour, had resigned his limbs to sleep, a certain one stood by him in a dream, who saluting him, and calling him by his name, said, 'Cædmon, sing me something.' Then he answering said, 'I know not how to sing; and for that reason I went out from the feast and retired hither, because I could not sing.' Again he who was talking with him said, 'Yet you have something to sing to me.' 'What,' said he, 'must I sing?' The other said, 'Sing the beginning of created things.' Having received this reply, he immediately began to sing verses in praise of God the Creator, which he had never heard, whereof this is the purport. Now we must praise the Author of the celestial kingdom, the power of the Creator and His counsel, the deeds of the Father of glory. How He, being eternal God, was the author of all wonderful things; who first created heaven for the sons of men, as the roof of their dwelling and afterwards created the earth, being the omnipotent guardian of mankind. This is the sense, but not the exact order of the words which he sang in his sleep, for songs, however excellently composed,

cannot be translated from one tongue into another, word for word, without some loss of their beauty and spirit. Moreover, on his rising up from sleep, he retained in memory all that he had sung in his dream, and presently added to it more words of song worthy of God, after the same fashion.

"And coming in the morning to the steward who was set over him, he told him what a gift he had received; and having been brought to the abbess, he was ordered, in the presence of many learned men, to declare his dream and to repeat the song, that it might be tested by the judgment of all, what or whence it was that he related. And all concluded that a celestial gift had been granted him by the Lord. And they interpreted to him a certain passage of sacred history or doctrine, and ordered him to transpose it, if he could, into poetical rhythm. And he, having undertaken it, departed, and returning in the morning, brought back what he was ordered to do, composed in most excellent verse. Whereupon presently the abbess, embracing heartily the grace of God in the man, instructed him to leave the secular habit, and to take the monastic vow; and having, together with all her people, received him into the monastery, associated him with the company of the brethren, and ordered him to be instructed in the whole course of sacred history. And he converted into most sweet song whatever he could learn from hearing, by thinking it over by himself, and, as though a clean animal, by *ruminating*; and by making it resound more sweetly, made his teachers in turn his hearers. Moreover, he sang of the creation of the world, and the origin of mankind, and the whole history of Genesis; concerning the going out of Israel from Egypt, and their entrance into the land of promise, and of many other histories of Holy Scripture; of the Lord's incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven; of the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the teaching of the apostles. He also made many songs concerning the terror of the future judgment, and the horror of the punishment of Gehenna, and the sweetness of the heavenly kingdom; besides many more, concerning the Divine benefits and judgments, in all which

he endeavoured to draw men away from the love of wickedness, and to excite them to the love and diligent practice of well-doing. For he was a very religious man, and humbly subject to the rules of regular discipline; but inflamed with a zeal of great fervour against those who would act contrary; wherefore also he made a fair ending of his life."

The fame of Cædmon's poem soon spread. "Others after him," as Bede tells us, "tried to make religious poems." He was thus the founder of a school of poets, which handed on the traditions of his work to that later school of Saxon poets of whom Cynewulf was the chief. (See next chapter.) It seems certain that many copies of Cædmon's poem were made, but what became of them we do not know. We read that King Alfred, in the ninth century, had copies sent to him from the North, and we expect that he gave these to the library of his school at Winchester; but all trace of them is lost. We should have no knowledge at all of the earliest English poem written in England (except for the opening passage quoted by Bede), if it had not been for a happy accident that restored to us a manuscript, part at least of which we may believe to be the work of Cædmon. In the early years of the seventeenth century Archbishop Ussher was searching diligently for books and manuscripts for the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and among those which he managed to procure was one that seemed by the handwriting to belong to the tenth century. It contained poems answering to the description given by Bede of those written by Cædmon. The Archbishop gave the manuscript to Francis Dujon (whose name in literature is Junius, from whom the MS. is sometimes called the Junian MS.). Junius was a scholar of Leyden, a great lover of the Anglo-Saxon language, which he had studied diligently. He had the manuscript printed at Amsterdam in 1650 and published it as the work of Cædmon. He brought the manuscript back to England, and showed it to his literary friends, chief among these being Milton. It is impossible for us to say whether the poem of the old Saxon poet had any influence upon the work of his seventeenth-century successor: but we

A Scribe Writing 30

From a MS. of the XVth century in the British Museum

like to think of the interest with which Milton, absorbed as he was in the political struggles of the time and already conscious of the first warning symptoms of the disease which brought his blindness, must have scanned the newly discovered treasure brought him by his friend. We know that he must have appreciated keenly the fine descriptive passages of the elder poet; we can fancy him reading them and giving them something of the majestic movement which marked his own verse; and we like to imagine that certain turns of expression and descriptive touches in his *Paradise Lost* came from lingering memories of the work of this brother-poet who had lived a thousand years before.

The manuscript, at first accepted without reserve as the work of Cædmon, was at a later time subjected to criticism. Some critics say that not a line was written by Cædmon, others allow him some share in it. It seems to be certain that he did not write the whole, but general opinion assigns to him the first and oldest part—*Genesis*, as it is called. We may safely call this Cædmon's paraphrase. But it is not as a paraphrase that the work is valuable. The passages which are of the highest poetic merit are those in which the writer leaves his original, and gives expression to his own ideas, or describes the experiences of his own life. He gives to the events of which he tells the setting familiar to him in his wild northern home. When he describes the deluge in the time of Noah, it is clear that his thoughts turn to the storms which so often beat upon the coastlands of Northumbria:

> Then sent forth the Lord
> Heavy rain from heaven; eke he hugely let
> All the welling burns on the world throng in
> Out of every earth vein; let the ocean streams
> Swarthy, sound aloud! Then upstepped the sea
> O'er the shore-stead walls. Strong was he and wroth
> Who the waters wielded, who with his wan wave
> Cloaked and covered then all the sinful children
> Of this middle earth.

The battle passages contained in the poem might be descriptions of the fierce encounters which had taken place not so long before between the Northumbrians and the Mercians.

Satan is pictured as a great war-leader, and his group of fallen angels resemble the company of 'war companions' which, in Saxon times gathered in close comradeship round a prince. The proud exultation in strength and prowess, the keen joy in revenge, remind the reader sometimes of the pagan epic of *Beowulf*; for the old spirit had not entirely died out under the influence of Christian teaching. But there are tender and pathetic passages, too, which breathe the pure spirit of the new religion—such are the description of the joys of heaven, or of the repentance of Adam and Eve. The poem is worthy to stand as the first great work of purely English origin, the forerunner of *Paradise Lost*.

CHAPTER III

THE EXETER BOOK

THE *Exeter Book* is so called because, since about 1071, it has been preserved in the library of Exeter Cathedral. Its real title is *Mycel Englisc boc be gehwilcum þingum on leod-wisan geworht*, which, translated into modern English is, "A large English book, on all sorts of things, wrought in verse." It was presented to the cathedral library by Leofric, Bishop of Devon and Cornwall and Chancellor to King Edward the Confessor. When he became Bishop in 1050, he found his cathedral at Exeter despoiled and neglected. There were only five books in the library and few treasures of any kind to give glory and sanctity to the famous building. This state of things Leofric set himself to remedy, and among other benefactions, he collected and presented to the cathedral library sixty volumes, some written in English, some in Latin. The list of these has been preserved, and in it appears the *Mycel Englisc boc*, a collection of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

The manuscript dates from the late tenth or early eleventh century, when the poems were collected and written out, but many of them were composed much earlier. Some, it is conjectured, originated from lays sung by minstrels in the fourth century. The manuscript now consists of 246 pages, and, although it has not been subjected to the dangers and chances which have beset the *Beowulf* manuscript, it has not escaped dilapidation. Several leaves are missing, both at the beginning and the end of the book, and the outside pages are worn and ink-stained; these injuries are probably the results of the book having been left for a considerable time unbound. There is a hole through the last twelve pages which looks as if it

had been burnt by a piece of lighted wood or paper falling upon the volume.

The poems contained in the *Exeter Book* fall naturally into two groups. Those contained in the first group are pagan in tone and spirit—though Christian interpolations are to be found—and belong to the period previous to the Saxon occupation of England. Some are thought to be even older than *Beowulf*. The poems of the second group are Christian, and most of them deal with religious subjects. Chief among these are the poems of Cynewulf and his followers, who belong to the second half of the eighth century and in whose work the influence of Cædmon is plainly to be seen.

The oldest poem in the book is called *Widsith*, or "The Far Traveller." It is the song of a minstrel who may, it is thought, have lived in the fourth century. There were two classes of Anglo-Saxon minstrels—the scop, who was generally attached to the train of a king or noble, and who composed, as well as sang, his lays; and the gleeman, who was of an inferior order and wandered about the country singing to the people of the towns and villages the songs which he had, in most instances, learnt from others. Widsith was a minstrel of the former class. "Many men and rulers have I known," he sang, "through many strange lands I have fared, throughout the spacious earth, parted from my kinsmen. Therefore I may sing in the mead-hall how the high-born gave me gifts." He looked back over a life filled with adventure and with happiness, and he sang his song in praise of his calling and of the great men who had befriended him. Success and praise had followed him, and the comradeship of his fellow craftsmen had made his life pleasant:

> *Scilling* then and with him I in a voicing clear,
> Lifted up the lay to our lord the conqueror;
> Loudly at the harping lilted high our voice.
> Then our hearers many, haughty of their heart,
> They that couth it well, clearly said in words
> That a better lay listed had they never.

So he had gone on from one triumph to another—

Till all flits away—
Life and light together—laud who getteth so,
Hath beneath the heaven high established power.

The next poem of the group—*The Complaint of Deor*—gives the other side of the minstrel's life. Deor, too, was a scop, but he lost favour with his lord and was superseded; so he sang his sad song, reminding himself that trouble comes to all men, and as others have overcome it, so also may he.

Whilom was I scop of the Heodenings;
Dear unto my lord! Deor was my name.
Well my service was to me many winters through.
Loving was my Lord; till at last Heorrenda,—
Skilled in song the man!—seized upon my laud-right
That the guard of earls granted erst to me.
That one overwent; *this* also may I.

The reader of Anglo-Saxon poetry soon becomes familiar with the mournful note that sounds in Deor's lament. It sounds in almost every work of those early times, giving to them a characteristic melancholy. *The Wanderer*, the next poem of the group we are considering, deals with a subject similar to that of *Deor*—the sorrows of a man who has lost his lord. Sadly comes the mourning note again:

All is full of trouble, all this realm of earth!
Doom of weirds is changing all the world below the skies;
Here our foe is fleeting, here the friend is fleeting.
Fleeting here is man, fleeting is the woman,
All the earth's foundation is an idle thing become.

The Seafarer, which follows *The Wanderer*, tells of the hard and painful life led by him who must seek his daily bread in the "ice-cold ocean paths" to which he is yet drawn with an irresistible fascination.

For the harp he has no heart, nor for having of the rings,
Nor in woman is his weal; in the world he's no delight,
Nor in anything whatever save the tossing o'er the waves.
O for ever he has longing who is urged toward the sea.

These four poems are the chief of what may be called the old pagan group. Of the Christian poems contained in the *Exeter Book* the most important, as has been said, are those written by the poet Cynewulf. Cynewulf and Cædmon are the only poets of these early times of whose personality we

know anything, and even of them we do not know very much. Cynewulf was probably a Northumbrian, born between 720 and 730. From his writings we learn that he was a scop in the service of a great lord. He was certainly a scholar who understood Latin, and had studied the best Latin works of the time From various references in his works a kind of biography has been built up, which, however, has little solid evidence to rest upon. It is conjectured that he was, during his youth, a gay and thoughtless singer who delighted in the splendour of noble houses and in the company of the great; that in his later middle age he had a vision of the holy rood, which turned his heart to Christ, and that from thenceforward he devoted himself to the writing of poetry which should serve to advance the glory of God. "I am old," he says in one of his later poems, "and ready to depart, having woven wordcraft and pondered deeply in the darkness of the world. Once I was gay in the hall and received gifts, appled gold and treasures. Yet was I buffeted with care, fettered by sins, beset with sorrows, until the Lord of all might and power bestowed on me grace, and revealed to me the mystery of the holy cross. Now know I that the joys of life are fleeting, and that the Judge of all the world is at hand to deal to every man his doom."

Cynewulf's *Crist* is the first poem in the *Exeter Book*. It is in three parts, the first telling of the coming of Christ to earth, the second of His ascension, the third of His second coming and of the Judgment Day. An intense personal feeling of religion marks the work throughout and gives it a simple but lofty beauty. The closing passage describes the heavenly home to which the poet hopes soon to follow his Master.

> Rest for righteous doers, rest withouten strife,
> For the good and blessed. Without gloom the day,
> Bright and full of blossoming; bliss that's sorrowless;
> Peace all friends between ever without enmity,
> Love that envieth not in the union of the saints
> For the happy ones of Heaven! Hunger is not there, nor thirst,
> Sleep nor heavy sickness, nor the scorching of the sun,
> Neither cold nor care, but the happy company
> Sheenest of all hosts shall enjoy for aye
> Grace of God their King, Glory with their Lord.

"The Exeter Book," showing the Life of St. Guthlac

By permission of the Cathedral Library, Exeter

The second part of *Crist* is signed with Cynewulf's name in the Runic letters used by the old Teutonic race. The next poem, *Juliana,* is signed in the same manner. It is the story of a Christian martyr in the time of the Emperor Maximian. Three other poems in the *Exeter Book*, though not signed, are thought to have been written by Cynewulf or by the school of poets that followed him. These are *The Life of St. Guthlac, Azarias,* and *The Phœnix. Azarias* contains the beautiful lines describing the effect of the coming of the angel to the fiery furnace into which Daniel and his two companions have been thrust.

> Then 'twas in the oven when the angel came,
> Windy cool and winsome, to the weather likest
> When is sent to earth in the summer tide,
> Dropping down of dew-rain at the dawn of day.

In *The Phœnix* occurs what is judged to be Cynewulf's finest descriptive passage :

> Winsome is the wold there ; there the wealds are green
> Spacious spread below the skies ; there may neither snow nor rain,
> Nor the furious air of frost, nor the flare of fire,
> Nor the headlong squall of hail, nor the hoar-frost's fall,
> Nor the burning of the sun, nor the bitter cold,
> Nor the weather over-warm, nor the winter shower,
> Do their wrong to any wight—but the wold abides
> Ever happy, healthful there. Honoured is that land.
> All ablown with blossoms.

A curious and characteristic form of composition in Old English, which was imitated from Latin examples, was the riddle. The *Exeter Book* contains eighty-nine of these riddles. They have been attributed, though somewhat doubtfully, to Cynewulf. Some of them are of real beauty, and show high imaginative power. The thirtieth riddle is :

> I have seen a wight wonderfully shapen,
> Bearing up a booty, in between his horns,
> A Lift-Vessel flashing light and with loveliness bedecked,
> Bearing home this booty brought from his war-marching !
> He would in the burg build himself a bower,
> Set it skilfully if it so might be.
> Then there came a wondrous wight o'er the world-wall's roof,—
> Known to all he is of the earth's indwellers—
> Snatched away his war-spoil, and his will against,
> Homeward drove the wandering wretch ! Thence he westward went,
> With a vengeance faring hastened further on.

Dust arose to heaven, dew fell on the earth,
Onward went the night, and not one of men,
Of the wandering of that wight ever wotted more.

The answer to this riddle is, The new moon with the old moon in its arms, driven from the sky by the rising of the sun.

The other poems contained in the *Exeter Book* are of minor importance. There is a fragment of a *Physiologus*, a characteristic composition of these early times, in which descriptions of various beasts are first given and afterward an allegorical meaning supplied for each detail. The panther, the whale, and the partridge are thus dealt with in the *Exeter Book*. There are also a few short religious poems, and a collection of proverbs that occupies 206 lines.

The *Exeter Book* may be called our first English anthology. It is valuable first by reason of the real beauty of many of the poems it contains, especially of those attributed to Cynewulf. It is valuable also for its historical importance as a witness to an age long gone by.

[The quotations from the *Exeter Book* are taken from Mr. Stopford Brooke's *Early English Literature*, by kind permission of the author.]

CHAPTER IV

BEDE'S ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH RACE

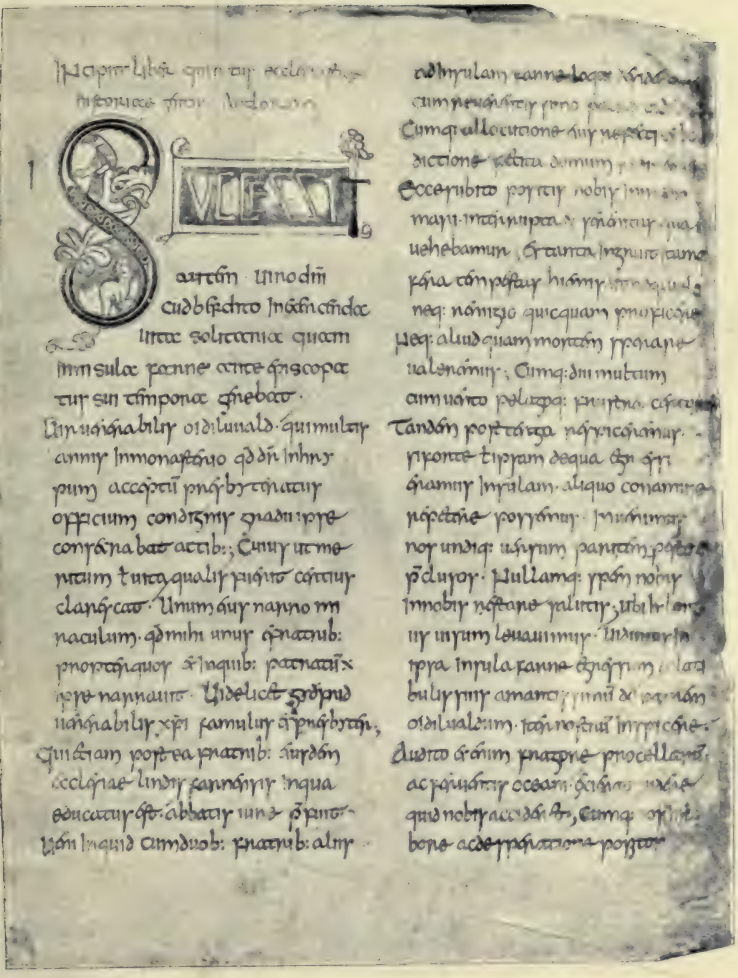
THE *Ecclesiastical History* cannot, in one sense, claim to be an English book, for it was originally written in Latin. It was, however, written in England, its author was English, its subject is the English race. It was translated into the English language by King Alfred about a hundred and fifty years after it was written, so that a version in the vulgar tongue has existed for more than a thousand years. It was the avowed model of the chroniclers of succeeding ages, who borrowed its facts and imitated its style. For these reasons, and because the history is of so great value and interest to Englishmen, even in the present day, it is classed here as an English book.

Its story takes us back to that short, brilliant period in the history of Northumbria during which she became a centre of intellectual activity such as had not before been known in England. The day of her political supremacy was over. King Ecgfrith had fallen in the battle of Nechtansmere 685, and the glory of Northumbria had departed. The scene of the struggle for supremacy in England had shifted from the north to the south. Northumbria for a time was left in peace to recover, as best she might, from the blow she had received. Steadily and quietly she won for herself a new supremacy, the glory of which has, in the eyes of the ages that have followed, caused her earlier triumphs to grow pale. She became a centre of learning and culture. Scholars flocked to the schools established within her borders, and the fame of her teachers was spread far and wide. She founded a literature,

and she fostered, in a noble and liberal spirit, all the forms of intellectual activity which had arisen in her dominions. There seemed some stirring influence abroad urging men to great efforts. History tends to show that the periods most favourable to literary activity are those which follow a long term of conflict and disturbance, when the stimulus of the struggle remains, though the burden of it has passed. So it was in the days of the Elizabethans; so it was in the days of the Saxons of Northumbria.

Religion had a great part in promoting this intellectual movement. The fervour of the previous period had by no means passed away, though, in 664, after the Synod of Whitby, the Irish monks had left Northumbria. Their influence remained, and the Roman Church which superseded the Irish, brought men who, though of different nature, and working by different methods, were in devotion and earnestness little behind their Irish brethren. Of these one of the most renowned is Benedict Biscop, who founded the great twin monasteries—St. Peter at Wearmouth and St. Paul at Jarrow. It is with these two monasteries that the greatest of all Northumbria's scholars —Bæda, or as he is known in history, the Venerable Bede—is connected.

"I was born," Bede tells us, "on the lands of the same monastery [that is, of the allied monasteries of St. Peter and St. Paul], and when I was seven years of age I was entrusted by my relatives to the most reverend Abbot Benedict [of Wearmouth] to be brought up, and afterwards to Ceolfrid [of Jarrow]; and dwelling all the succeeding time of my life under the roof of the same monastery, I gave all my attention to the study of the Scriptures; and while observing the regular discipline, and the daily charge of singing in the church, I always took delight in learning, teaching and writing." In these few words the simple history of Bede's uneventful life is told. He never left the monastery of Jarrow, and he took no part in the great national events of his times. "Learning, teaching and writing" he passed his life, and it is as scholar teacher, and author that we remember him.



Page from MS. copy of Bede's "Ecclesiastical History"
(VIIIth century)
In the British Museum

The fame of his teaching drew crowds of eager learners to the quiet Northumbrian monastery. Six hundred English monks, besides strangers from other lands made up his school. Groups of them gathered round him in the great cloister which formed the centre of the daily life of a mediæval monastery. The cloister was a quadrangle, enclosed by the high walls of the monastery buildings; all round it ran a covered arcade, and in the middle was a grass plot or flower-garden. It was in the cloister that the monk of these days spent nearly all the time not occupied by services in the church or meals in the refectory. Here the children who came to the convent for instruction were taught; here monks worked at the copying and illumination of manuscripts; here the psalms for the church services were practised; and amid all the stir and bustle, solitary monks essayed the difficult task of fixing their minds on devotional exercises and meditating upon sacred things.

We may picture Bede seated in the sunny cloister of Jarrow with a group of his scholars gathered round him. His gentle, kindly face is alight with enthusiasm as he lovingly handles one of the precious manuscripts with which the zeal of Benedict Biscop has provided the convent library. Something of his fervour passes to the scholars to whom he is discoursing, and within them begins to kindle the same deep love of learning which has given beauty and dignity to the quiet life of their teacher. Later, they sit down to their copying, or to the study of the treatises on theology, astronomy, physics, music, philosophy, grammar, rhetoric or medicine, which Bede, from the great and varied knowledge gathered by his studious research, has written for them. From time to time a scholar brings some difficulty he has found in his work, to the teacher, and receives from him ready help, with perhaps a kindly, half-playful word of praise or admonition.

When winter came—and even in the sheltered southern side of the cloister the keen winter winds numbed the fingers of the shivering monks—it is probable that Bede, with a small party of his scholars, was provided with a cell or small room within the convent. This was an indulgence not common in those days,

for the monks were expected to inure themselves to hardships and rise superior to the love of comfort. But it is probable that, at least in the later years of his life, Bede enjoyed some relaxation of the rigours of the ordinary monastic life. It was in the seclusion of the cell that his great work, the *Ecclesiastical History*, was probably written. It was undertaken, Bede tells us, chiefly by the advice of Albinus, Abbot of the monastery of Canterbury. From Albinus Bede received the records and letters relating to the coming of Augustine, and the spread of Christianity in Kent. In similar ways he gained information concerning the other English kingdoms, and he is careful in each case to state the authority on which he relies. "I humbly entreat the reader," he says, "that if anywhere in this that I have written he finds any things set down otherwise than as the truth is, he will not impute this to me, since according to the true rule of history, I have laboured sincerely to commit to writing, for the instruction of posterity, such things as I collected from common report."

The best passages in the book, however, are the accounts of events which have come under Bede's personal observation. He tells his stories in a style so clear, straightforward and simple, yet of such perfect art, that the reader cannot help being charmed. Throughout, the personality of the writer appears in all he says. We know more of Bede when we have read his great book than it is possible to know of some writers the records of whose lives are full and complete. His gentle, sunny nature, the wisdom and nobility of his aims, his absolute sincerity and complete unselfishness all become clear to us. The *Ecclesiastical History* deserves a high place among the books of England. "If," says Dr. Rhodes James, in *The Cambridge History of Literature*, "a panegyric were likely to induce our readers to turn to it for themselves, that panegyric should be attempted here." It is hoped that this short account of the writer and his book may lead many to hold the history of the old Northumbrian monk in honoured remembrance, and to read carefully some selections, at least, from its pages.

Four years after the *History* was finished Bede's long and

useful life came to an end. His disciple Cuthbert gives, in a letter to Cuthwin, an account of the last days of their "father and master, whom God loved." "During these days," says Cuthbert, "he laboured to compose two works well worthy to be remembered, viz., he translated the Gospel of St. John . . . into our own tongue for the benefit of the Church; and some collections out of the Book of Notes of Bishop Isidorus. . . . And on the shining of the morn, that is, at the fourth hour, he diligently charged us to write what we had begun; and this was done unto the third hour. But from the third hour we walked in procession, with the reliques of the saints, as the custom of the day demanded. There was, however, one of us with him who said to him, 'Most beloved master, there is yet one chapter wanting, and it seems to be troubling you to ask you more. Then he said, 'It is no trouble. Take your pen and mend it, and write quickly.' And he did so. Moreover at the ninth hour he said to me, 'I have some things of value in my chest—that is, pepper, napkins, and incense; but run quickly and bring the priests of our monastery to me, that I also may distribute to them such gifts as God has given me. The rich indeed of this world aim at giving gold, silver, and whatsoever else is precious, but I will give with much charity and joy to my brethren what God hath given me.' And this I did with fear and in haste. And he addressed each one, admonishing and entreating them to say masses and prayers for him, which they readily promised to do. Moreover all bewailed and wept, chiefly because he had said that they should see his face no more in this world; but they rejoiced in that he said, 'It is time that I should return to Him who made me, who created me, who formed me out of nothing. I have lived a long time. The good Judge hath well ordained my life for me. The time for me to be set free is at hand, for indeed my soul much desires to behold my King Christ in His beauty.' These and many other things he spoke and passed the day in cheerfulness until the evening. And the aforesaid boy said, 'Most beloved master, one sentence is still unwritten.' Then he said, 'Write it quickly.' After a little while the boy said, 'The

sentence is finished now.' Then he said, 'It is well. You have spoken the truth. It is finished. Take my head in your hands, because I have great delight in sitting opposite my holy place, in which I was wont to pray, in order that I also sitting may be able to call upon my Father.' And then on the pavement of his cell while he was saying 'Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' he breathed forth his last breath from his body, and so departed to the heavenly kingdom."

CHAPTER V

THE ENGLISH CHRONICLE

AFTER the death of Bede there was very little attempt at writing history until the twelfth century brought the age of the great chroniclers. In the monasteries throughout the country a diary of passing events was more or less regularly kept, but this usually related only to affairs immediately concerning the establishment, and the record took the form of brief disconnected notes. Occasionally a fuller entry marked a more than ordinarily important piece of news; in such cases the rule was that the person giving the information should write his version on a piece of loose parchment, and put it inside the book of annals, that the officer whose special work it was to keep the records might copy it in if he thought fit. But in the period immediately succeeding that of Bede the entries in all the monastic records seem to have been few and unimportant.

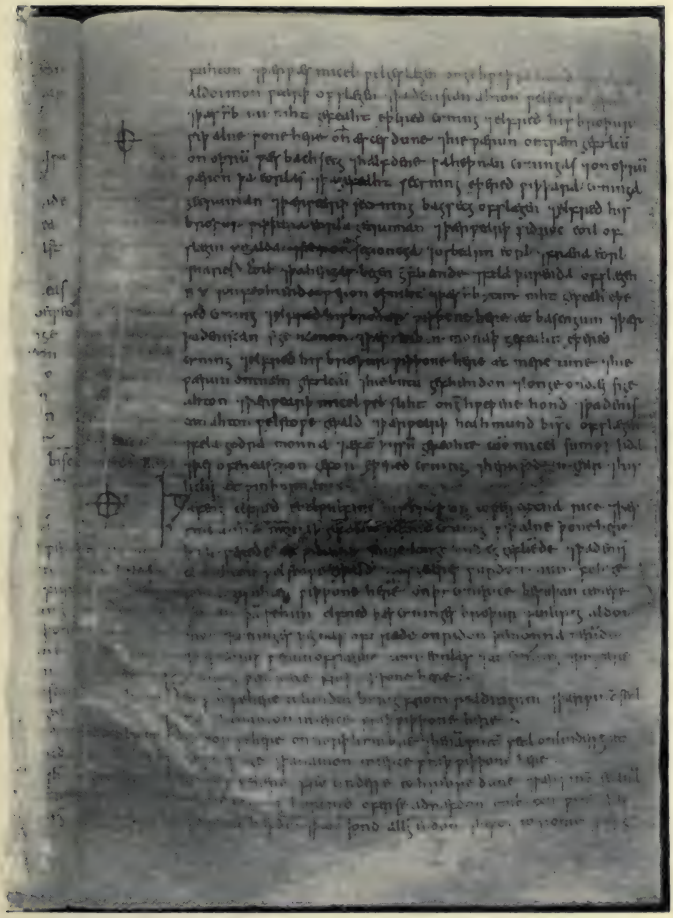
Gradually in some of the monasteries these brief unconnected jottings grew into something which might be called a chronicle. The monastery of Winchester, capital of the West-Saxon kingdom began, in the eighth century, the record which developed into *The English Chronicle*. Its early entries are meagre and infrequent, but the simplicity and vigour of the style gives the short descriptions that are occasionally attempted a certain picturesqueness. One of the earliest entries is under the date 755. It tells how Cynewulf, a West Saxon noble, took the kingdom of Wessex from Sigebright "for unrighteous deeds," and with the consent of the Witan established himself in Sigebright's place; how Cyneheard, brother of Sigebright, afterward attacked Cynewulf who had ridden out with only a few

followers to visit at a house in Merton; how the house was surrounded and a desperate fight fought against great odds by the king's little band until they all lay dead upon the ground. This is probably the earliest existing piece of prose in any Teutonic language.

Early in the ninth century an attempt was made by the monks of Winchester to extend the record backward by writing the history of the Saxons in England, from the landing of Hengist and Horsa. The mass of oral tradition that existed among the countryfolk was examined in such imperfect fashion as the opportunities of the writers allowed. Old ballads were collected, and portions of them incorporated in the *Chronicle*. From a literary point of view, the result was not highly successfull, but as an historical record it has considerable value.

In 871 Alfred succeeded to the throne of Wessex, and with his accession came a stirring in almost every department of national life. The early part of his reign was so troubled by Danish incursions that internal reform was impossible, but when peace had been made Alfred turned his thoughts to the improvement of his kingdom. We cannot here follow him in his manifold activities as statesman, administrator, soldier and social reformer, but of his zeal and enthusiasm for letters, some mention must be made.

What the state of learning in England was when he came to the throne his own often-quoted words will tell. "When I began to reign," he says, "I cannot remember one priest south of the Thames who could understand his service-book, and very few in other parts of the country." The flourishing schools in Northumbria had been destroyed by the Danes, and learning had been almost entirely stamped out. Scholars had fled the country, and there was no place in England where a man, however ardently he desired to learn, could find capable teachers. A great darkness of ignorance had fallen on the land. Into this darkness Alfred strove to bring light. He brought over teachers from the famous Continental schools of Charlemagne; he established schools in England, and taught in them himself; he made laws to further learning; he trans-



A Page from the MS. of "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle"
Containing the account of the Battle of Ashdown
(*Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*)

lated into English famous Latin works which he thought might be useful to his people ; and he wrote in his own vigorous and direct prose addresses in which he strove to show his people how good and beautiful and altogether desirable was the knowledge they neglected and despised. He breathed life into the dry bones of the Winchester annals, and of a dull and meagre record he made an inspiring history.

From 866 to 887 the *Chronicle* is continuous, no year being omitted. The whole of this part of the *Chronicle* seems to be the work of one hand, and, not improbably, was written by Alfred himself. Toward the end of his reign the early part of the *Chronicle* was again revised, and many passages from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* inserted to fill up gaps.

After the death of Alfred the learning he had worked so hard to foster rapidly died out. Once more the fierce onslaughts of the Danes drove all save thoughts of war from the minds of the people. The monasteries sank back into a state of ignorance, the poets were silent. The entries in the *Chronicle* during this period tell of little else but fierce fighting, disastrous raids on the countryside, and cruel suffering among the people. Yet the patriotic fervour which was aroused by these national misfortunes gives vigour and fluency to the accounts, and makes the *Chronicle* of real literary value in this barren period. "The *Chronicle* alone marks for more than half a century the continuance of literary activity in England."

During the middle part of the tenth century there are few entries, and these are of no great interest, with the exception of several ballads which are inserted under the dates of the incidents of which they treat. Chief of these is the ballad describing the battle of Brunanburh, 937, in which Athelstan defeated the allied forces of Scots, Welsh and Danes. This ballad is best known through Tennyson's noble translation.

The *Chronicle* did not remain permanently in the hands of the monks of Winchester. It seems to have been taken at different times to various other monasteries, and collated with records kept in those establishments ; and these new forms were in turn copied and enlarged by monks of other districts. So

that it is probable a large number of copies of the *Chronicle*, varying in details and in the attention given to local matters, were made. Several of these have come down to us. In their essential features, however, they are so much alike that we are justified in regarding them as forming one book.

Various recensions were made by different hands, and ultimately the history was extended as far back as B.C. 60.

The longest of the various forms of the *Chronicle* is that which goes by the name of the *Peterborough Chronicle*, and extends to the year 1154. It contains the famous and often-quoted passage describing the terrible condition of the country in the days of Stephen.

The *English Chronicle* thus covers the history of England for more than two and a half centuries. On the whole the period with which it deals is a dark one, and the impression left after reading it is an impression of gloom and disaster, though the story is not without its brighter passages. Its literary merit is, naturally, very unequal, seeing that it is the work of many hands. But its importance in the history of English prose is great, and its importance in the history of the English nation still greater. "From an historical point of view the *Chronicle* was the first national, continuous history of a western nation in its own language; from a literary point of view it was the first great book in English prose."

Middle English Period

BY the middle of the thirteenth century the struggle between the languages of the conquering Normans and the conquered Saxons was almost over. The English language had come out of the conflict without injury to its vigour or its beauty. The loss of inflexions had rendered it less stiff and more adaptable, and it had increased its resources by large plunderings from the Normans. But it had become terribly disorganized, and there was urgent need for a master hand to remove the marks of stress and strain, to repress the exuberance of victory, and to make ready the language of England for great and serious uses.

Yet even in its disordered state it managed to achieve some notable pieces of work. Several delightful lyrics date from this period, and these have a freshness, a gaiety and a free musical movement that the more sombre spirit of the earlier literature could not compass. The Normans had introduced into England the metrical romance, and its influence was strong enough to originate here a new form of literature. Old stories and legends were worked up into this form ; the stories of King Arthur, of Charlemagne, of Alexander, and the Siege of Troy were especially popular. Religion, which, as we have seen, had become the chief subject of the poetry of the Anglo-Saxon period, kept a prominent place in the literature of the Middle Ages, and long didactic and moral poems were common.

Toward the end of the fourteenth century came the work of Chaucer, which marks an entirely new era in English poetry. Chaucer is commonly called 'The Father of English Poetry.' The title is perhaps a trifle misleading, for, as we have seen, some work of high poetic value had been produced before his time. The experimental stage was over, and poetical

traditions were established. Yet, in another sense, the title is well deserved. Chaucer is our first great poet. He produced not one happy lyric, not a few noble poetic passages standing out from a mass of mediocre verse, but a body of work of sustained excellence. He did not blindly follow a convention or a tradition, either with regard to his subject or his versification. He laid the whole varied experience of his life under contribution for his poems. He used a fresh and flowing metre full of clear harmonies. The service he rendered to our English speech would, of itself, entitle him to remembrance. Out of the chaos he made order. He welded the French and English elements which were existing side by side, yet without union, into one speech which was a perfect medium for the expression of poetic thought. He set up a standard which was accepted by all who came after him.

Chaucer is thus the last and the greatest of our mediæval poets, and the first of a new line which appeared in its full glory in the days of Elizabeth. His work has, therefore, a peculiar interest and value in the history of English literature.

The prose of the period consisted chiefly of the Latin works of the chroniclers, until, toward its close came Wiclif's translation of the Bible and *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville.*

A new literary form which developed during this period must also be noted. The twelfth century gave us our first example of the miracle-play, which marks the beginning of the drama in England. The miracle-play originated in the services of the Church, into which, as early as the fifth century, an element of dramatic representation had been introduced. For example, on Easter morning the empty sepulchre was shown: the holy women came with their spices and ointments, and were met by the angel. Mary spoke with the risen Christ, believing him to be the gardener; St. John and St. Peter entered the tomb. The extension of this practice produced a play, which was intended to illustrate some doctrine of the Church, or some event of the Bible story. At first the plays were performed in the church, with priests for actors; they closely followed the Scripture narrative, and made little attempt at dramatic

characterization, and still less at literary excellence. After a time, however, the representation passed from the control of the clergy and came under that of the trade guilds and corporations. The plays were acted in open spaces in the city, and laymen were engaged as actors. Under these circumstances many new developments took place. The plays lost some of their didactic purpose, incidents being chosen with a view to their dramatic effect rather than to their doctrinal significance; characters and incidents for which the Scriptures gave no warrant were introduced: even a comic element found its way into the story.

It was at a comparatively advanced stage of its development that the religious drama found its way into England. It was introduced from the Continent by the Normans. We have a record of a play dealing with the life of St. Katherine being performed at Dunstable about 1110, but the play itself is lost. It was not until the fourteenth century that the miracle-play reached its full development, and that the great 'cycles' or series of plays came into existence. Four of these cycles—those of Chester, Coventry, Wakefield and York—have come down to us; and it is almost certain that other large towns possessed similar collections, which were acted on certain stated festivals during the year.

The greater freedom of treatment allowed in the later miracle-plays led to the introduction of various allegorical characters; and this element, once introduced, developed rapidly. Plays were written in which all the characters were of this nature, and these plays were called moralities. In these, various vices and virtues, and such abstractions as time, riches, and death, were personified. The morality plays, although they never became as popular as the miracle-plays from which they were derived, were acted until the early part of the seventeenth century, gradually dying out when the regular drama, which for more than a century had been growing up side by side with them, had reached a very advanced stage of development.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHRONICA MAJORA OF MATTHEW PARIS

THE *Chronica Majora*, like the *Ecclesiastical History*, is written in Latin, but the reasons for including it among 'English books' are as strong as in the former case. The *Chronica Majora* is a type of a whole class of books written in England during several centuries, and these form a connecting link between the *English Chronicle* and the 'history' of modern times. Very little prose of any other kind was written during this period. Moreover, the writing of the *Chronica Majora* illustrates an important phase of the literary life of the country, and shows how literature was kept alive during the Middle Ages. It thus helps to bridge over the gap which intervenes between the Anglo-Saxon period and that foreshadowing of the great Revival of Learning which came in the days of Chaucer.

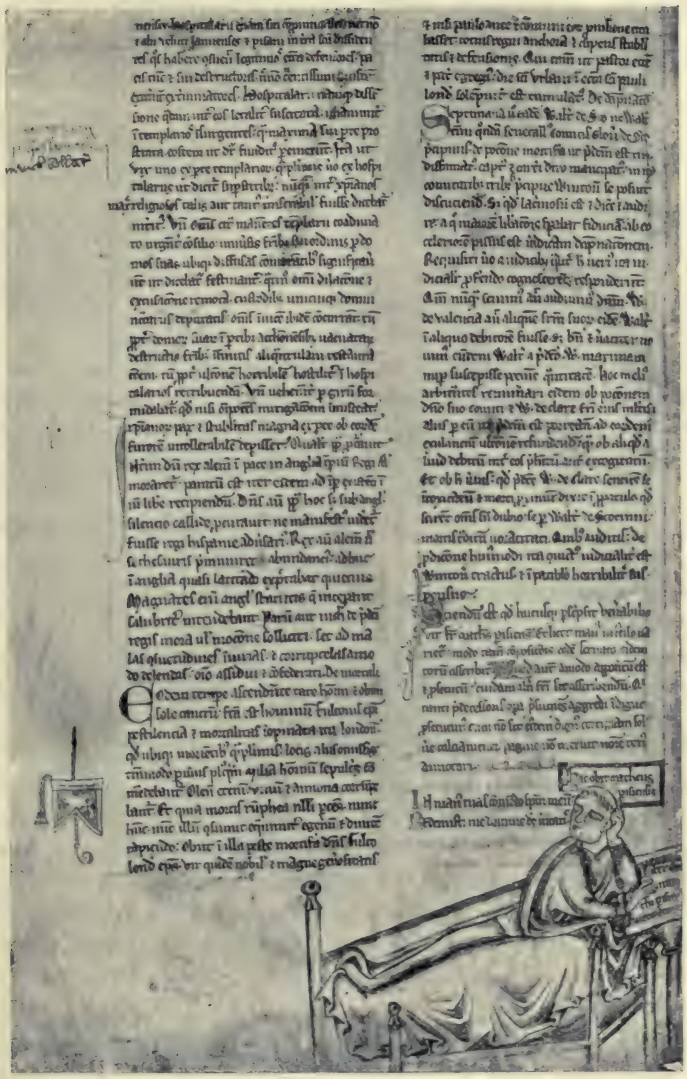
The last entry in the *English Chronicle* was made, as we have seen, in 1154. But before that time the task of writing the annals of England had been taken up by a new order of chroniclers. William I and his Norman followers had conquered, and settled in the country, and the Normans brought to the work of Chronicle-writing qualities which the native writers did not possess. They had a natural taste for history, and by virtue of their Latin origin they had also a power of ordered, logical thought which was not one of the characteristics of the Saxons. The chronicles of the Normans were still written in Latin, and at first the writers dealt with English history after the manner of foreigners, taking, on all questions, the Continental rather than the insular point of

view. But as the years went on, and Norman and Saxon were gradually welded into one nation, the tone of the *Chronicles* changed. They were still written in Latin, for the idea that the vulgar tongue could be used for serious literary purposes had not been accepted, indeed hardly conceived, by any of the scholars of Europe. But they became distinctly English in tone and sentiment, and it is quite apparent that in the minds of the writers, there was now little difference between Norman and Saxon. The interests of the two races were regarded as identical.

The work of the twelfth and early thirteenth century chroniclers shows great and notable qualities. They wrote real histories, not simply annals. They had a keen historic sense, which taught them how to select and arrange their material, to trace the connexion of cause and effect, and to judge rightly of the importance of particular events in influencing the course of affairs. English historians of modern times find their works invaluable, and even writers on Continental history are often glad to use them, for no other European country possesses chronicles of the Middle Ages which can approach the English in fullness, accuracy and lucidity.

Monks were still, for the most part, the chief chronicle writers. But they were monks who held a very different position from that held by the unknown and sequestered writers of the *English Chronicle.* They were learned, but they were not simply scholars ; they were men of the world. Many of them had been employed by the King in State affairs, and had spent a considerable time at the court. They were in the midst of the stir and movement of public life, and they took a keen interest in the politics of the day. This first-hand knowledge and personal enthusiasm are clearly shown in their works.

From the fame of these chroniclers the monasteries where they lived gained an added importance. St. Albans Abbey was especially noted for its chronicle, which was mainly the work of two men—Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris. St. Albans was one of the richest and most important of the



Page of the MS. of "Chronica Majora" at the point where the Author's work breaks off in 1259 54

The illustration is a portrait of Matthew Paris upon his deathbed and is thought to be by himself. From the Royal MS. in the British Museum

English monastic establishments. Its situation enabled its inmates to keep in touch with all the great movements of the time. A constant stream of travellers, passing to or from London, sought, at the Abbey, the hospitality always so freely given to strangers, and these brought the latest news of what was going on in the capital.

The office of historiographer at St. Albans Abbey was created in the latter part of the twelfth century. It was first held by Roger of Wendover. He compiled, from old documents and traditions, a chronicle beginning at the Norman Conquest and going on to his own day. He was industrious and painstaking in all that he did, and that part of the chronicle which is his own original work shows that he possessed many of the gifts which distinguished the chroniclers of the age.

While Roger of Wendover was diligently fulfilling the duties of his office, a boy was growing up in the Abbey School who was destined to be his successor, and also his superior in the art of the historiographer. In 1217 this boy became a novice in the monastery, and assisted Roger of Wendover in some of the less important parts of his work. He learnt to draw, to paint, to illuminate, and to work in metals; he studied the science of heraldry as well as the usual subjects of the mediæval student's course. The convent, recognizing his ability, sent him to the University of Paris, then at the height of its fame, that he might continue his studies there. Whether it is to this fact that he owes his surname we do not know, but in all the records in which he is mentioned his name is given as Matthew Paris. In 1236 Roger of Wendover died, and Matthew Paris succeeded him as historiographer to the Abbey of St. Albans. He soon became a man of considerable consequence in England, highly esteemed as a scholar, writer, and man of affairs. He lived for long periods at the Court, on terms of close intimacy with the greatest men of the day. He was high in the favour of Henry III, and it is said that a large part of the material for his chronicle was gathered in conversation with the king.

But Court favour did not make Matthew Paris a courtier, in the sense of a sayer of smooth and flattering things to please

the royal ear. His chief characteristic, and that for which his countrymen loved him during his lifetime, and revered his memory after he was dead, was his sturdy patriotism, which showed itself in outspoken opposition to any attack on the liberty or well-being of England. Foreign interference more especially aroused his ire. He was a good Catholic, yet he spoke in the strongest terms of the Pope's unlawful exactions, and opposed with all his might the emissaries sent from Rome. Harpies and bloodsuckers he called them, plunderers who did not merely shear but skin the sheep. He did not hesitate to reprove the king for not offering a stronger resistance to these ill-doers. The clergy of England, he said, looked to the king for support, but they found him "as it were the stalk of a reed on which those who lean in confidence are wounded by the fragments."

In all the writings of Matthew Paris these qualities of patriotism and outspokenness are plainly to be seen. The alterations and additions which he made to the *Chronicle* of Roger of Wendover are nearly always such as serve to bring out these traits. For example, after the account of the fall of Hubert de Burgh he inserts the famous refusal of the smith to put irons on the justiciar—"Is he not that most faithful and noble Hubert who so often saved England from foreigners?" Another quality which made his writings acceptable to the men of his own day was the homely pungency of their language. We are reminded as we read some of his exhortations, of the style of another great ecclesiastic who lived three hundred years later—Hugh Latimer. "Did not we find the bones of our brethren there, hard by the High Altar," wrote Matthew Paris, "when we were beautifying the same? O ye degenerate sons of this degenerate age! Two centuries ago and our monks were men of faith and prayer. In the year of grace one thousand two hundred and fifty-one we found more than thirty of them buried together, and their bones were lying there, white and sweet, redolent with the odour of sanctity every one; each man had been buried as he died, in his monastic habit, and his shoes upon his feet too. Aye, and *such* shoes

—shoes made for wear and not for wantonness. The soles of the shoes were sound and strong, they might have served the purpose for poor men's naked feet even now, after centuries of lying in the grave. Blush ye! ye with your buckles, and your pointed toes and your fiddle faddle. These shoes upon the holy feet that we dug up were as round at the toe as at the heel, and the latchets were all of one piece with the uppers. No rosettes in those days, if you please! They fastened their shoes with a thong, and they wound that thong round their blessed ankles, and they cared not in those holy days whether their shoes were a *pair*. Left foot and right foot, each was as the other; and we, when we gazed at the holy relics—we bowed our heads at the edifying sight, and we were dumbfounded even to awe as we swung our censers over the sacred graves of the ages past."

The only part of the *Chronica Majora* which is entirely Matthew Paris's work is the history of the years 1235–1253. During this time his home was the great abbey of St. Albans, although, as we have seen, he spent long periods at the Court; also in 1248 he was sent by the Pope on a mission to the monks of Norway, and was absent about a year. We can imagine him returning to the monastery after one of these absences, eager to write down all the news that he had gathered, and to receive the report of the monks of St. Albans, who had been making their daily record for him while he had been away. No sort of news came amiss to him. His chronicle contains reports of the weather and of the harvest, records of births, marriages and deaths, quaint anecdotes, stories of trivial offences against monastic rule, and of crimes committed by obscure individuals, with their punishment—all these side by side with the accounts of great national events. This miscellaneous budget of news he transcribed in the beautiful hand learnt in his convent-bred youth. Some of his work was probably done in the small private apartment which the dignity and importance of his office secured for his special use, but for the most part, he sat, we think, in the scriptorium, working in company with his convent brethren.

The scriptorium was a special apartment for the use of copyists and other workers concerned in the making of books. It was to be found in those monasteries where this work was carried on on too large a scale for the accommodation of the cloister to suffice. As early as the end of the eleventh century a scriptorium had been established at St. Albans, by Paul, the fourteenth abbot, who was a kinsman of Lanfranc. Lanfranc himself had given active help and encouragement in the work. The scriptorium adjoined the cloister, and was large enough for about twenty scribes to carry on their work. The writers sat at tables "carefully and artificially constructed." Each was supplied by the armarius—the official in charge of the scriptorium—with the implements and materials for his work —quill pens and ink of various colours—gold, silver, black, red, blue and yellow; rulers, penknives, chalk, pumice stone for erasing errors, weights to keep down the parchment. Round the walls of the scriptorium hung scrolls bearing rules and admonitions. The chief rule was that absolute silence must be maintained. Even if a writer wanted a book of reference he must not ask for it in words, but by means of a code of signals. An extended hand drew the attention of the armarius, who waited for the sign to follow. If a missal or service book was wanted, the applicant made the sign of the cross; for a psalter he put his hands on his head in the form of a crown, signifying King David; if he required the work of a pagan author he scratched his ear, as a dog might do, for pagans were esteemed but as dogs.

In the silent, orderly, busy room, work of various kinds went on. The boys and younger monks of the monastery copied letters, or transcribed service books for the use of the house. The more skilled writers made copies of rare manuscripts. Several were probably employed in making drafts of the material required by the historiographer for his chronicle, writing out extracts from documents, or making fair copies of each section as it was finished. Some were kept busy with the legal documents which the business of the establishment necessitated; for monasteries in those days held much property

in land, derived from various sources, and deeds of gift, transferences, leases, and agreements were constantly wanted. There were besides documents connected with lawsuits, of which a great abbey commonly had at least one proceeding. Secular scribes employed by the establishment, worked side by side with the regular inmates. These did a great part of the work of illuminating. They put in capital letters, rubrics, marginal ornaments and illustrations. Work of a very particular nature was done in a smaller room opening out of the scriptorium.

It is thought that the illustrations of the *Chronica Majora*, as well as the actual writing, are the work of Matthew Paris himself. Some of these are very curious. There is a picture of a Gothic shrine, carried by monks, which paralytics attempt to touch—the figures quaint and conventional in the extreme; and another of "a strange animal little known in England"—an elephant, "drawn from nature," the first, says Matthew Paris, that has been seen in the country.

The work of writing and copying was highly esteemed, and regarded as one of the most important of a monastery's activities. Benefactors often left lands to be devoted to the upkeep of the scriptorium, or the monastery itself set aside a special fund for the purpose. No difficulty was found in disposing of the works produced. A system of exchange between the various monasteries was carried on, by means of which each was able to acquire a varied selection of books. Rich men were beginning to take an interest in literature and learning and were willing to pay high prices for copies of rare manuscripts which they would either present to cathedral or monastic libraries, or keep as hoarded treasures in their own houses.

In this way the mediæval Church preserved the works of the fathers, and such of the ancient classics as were within its reach. In this way, too, it added to the store original works, which, although not of supreme literary merit, had yet their value and interest to their own age and to the ages to come. Of these Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora* is one of the most

important. In it the art of the chroniclers reached its highest point. After his death in 1259 came a decline, and no other historian of any note arose in England until the Renaissance brought a revival in every department of literature.

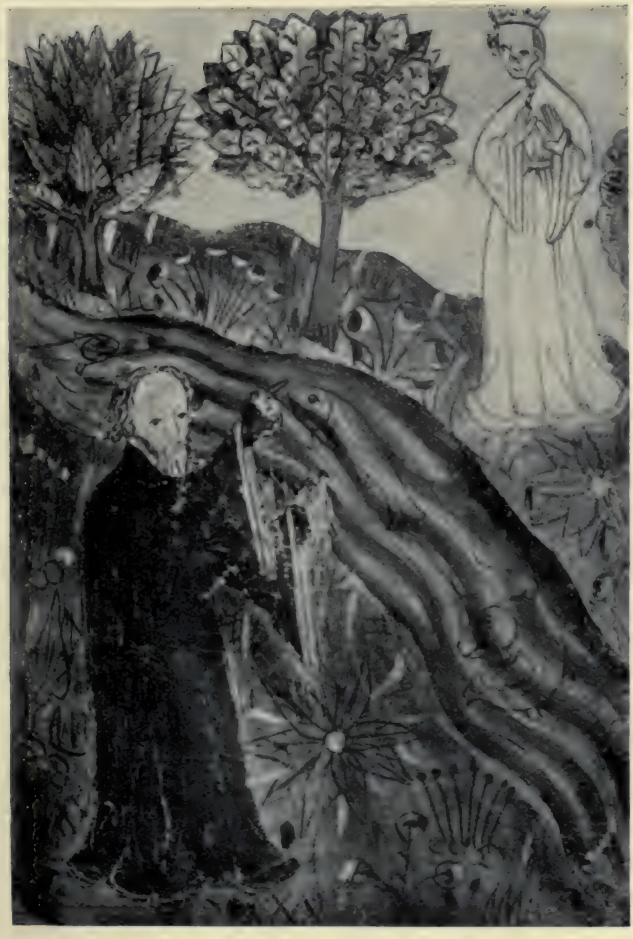
CHAPTER VII

PEARL: SIR GAWAYNE AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

> We lost you, for how long a time,—
> True pearl of our poetic prime!
> We found you, and you gleam re-set
> In Britain's lyric coronet.
>
> TENNYSON

THE 'pearl' of Lord Tennyson's verse is a beautiful fourteenth-century poem, the manuscript of which, having lain unnoticed for perhaps three or four hundred years, was brought to light in the early part of the nineteenth century. It is a wonderful little poem, and more wonderful still if it is considered in connexion with the age in which it was written. The thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries were, in English literature, the flourishing period of the romance. The love of story-telling, which we have seen, was strong among the people when the minstrel delighted his Saxon audiences with *Beowulf*, had never died out, though, with the coming of the Normans the nature of the stories that were told had changed. Minstrels sang of gorgeous banquets and glittering tournaments, of the dazzling beauty of fair ladies and the marvellous deeds that knights wrought in their service. Among all this mass of literature, of which the gold and the tinsel alike shone with surpassing splendour, was set the pure radiance of *Pearl*. No other title could so aptly describe the quiet loveliness of the story told by an unknown singer of the fourteenth century. It is the story of the love of a father for his little two-year-old motherless daughter, his pearl so round and radiant, who in his eyes was always beautiful. But the baby girl died—" I lost it—in an arbour—alas!

it passed from me from grass to earth." The lonely father mourned for his treasure, mourned, it seems, for many years. Then one day he went into the 'arbour green,' where his pearl had passed from his keeping. It was August, and the reapers were busy among the corn; the landscape was bright with the glory of summer flowers. The father sat by his child's grave and mused, and, as he sat, a vision came to him. He dreamed that he was transported to a wonderful land, such as no man had ever seen. A great joy possessed him, and he forgot his loss and his loneliness. He wandered along by the side of a stream, and as he went, his gladness increased. He looked across the stream, to where on the other side shone a crystal cliff. At its foot sat a girl. The father knew his child again, though the baby had grown into a gracious maiden. "I knew her well," he said, "long ago I had seen her face." He longed to speak to his daughter, but a fear, born of the strangeness of all things round him, kept back his words. Then the girl lifted her lovely face and looked at her father, and with that look intense longing and fear and joy thrilled through him, so that he knew not what to do. The girl stood up, and he saw more plainly the beauty of her face and of her array. Pure white pearls decked the crown that she wore upon her head, and the shining white robe whose burnished folds fell around her; on her breast shone a pearl of marvellous loveliness, whose worth no man could estimate. The father tells how he spoke across the stream to his daughter. "Art thou my Pearl," he asked, "the baby girl I have loved and mourned? How didst thou come to this glorious home, so far from thy father who has been joyless since he lost thee?" The maiden again lifted her grey eyes to his face. "Thy Pearl is not lost," she said, "but in this joyful garden, free from sin and sorrow, is safely treasured." So they talked together. Pearl told of her wonderful happiness, and lovingly reproved her father when he wished to cross the stream and enter the heavenly country. He had, she said, quite misunderstood the laws of that country, and the way in which men might come to it. She bade him have patience



Reproduced from the Illumination in the Cotton MS.
of "Pearl" . 62
At the British Museum

until he was called; meanwhile, if he would, he might look upon a vision of the New Jerusalem that was his daughter's home. The vision passed before him, and he describes the glories of the city in words inspired by the Book of Revelation. As he looked on it, the streets were thronged with maidens radiantly bedecked, like his own blest one, and in the midst of them he saw her, his 'little queen.' Then he forgot all the splendours before him in joy at looking on the face which was to him the face of the baby girl he had lost so long before. But suddenly the vision faded, and he awoke to find himself lying on the grass alone.

The only copy of *Pearl* known to be in existence is to be found among the Cottonian collection of manuscripts. It is bound up with some thirteenth-century theological treatises, and the unattractive appearance of these probably discouraged readers from attempting further investigations. But early in the reign of Queen Victoria, Sir Frederick Madden, Keeper of the Manuscripts in the British Museum, made a thorough examination of the works under his charge. He discovered that the volume in question contained, besides the theological treatises, four Middle English poems, which have been called *Pearl, Cleanness, Patience,* and *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight.* Professor Gollancz describes the handwriting of the manuscript as small, sharp and irregular, belonging apparently to the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century. There are neither titles nor rubrics, the chief divisions being marked by large initial letters of blue flourished with red. The manuscript contains several coarsely executed illuminations, each occupying a full page. No single line of any of the four poems has been discovered in any other manuscript.

Pearl is written in twelve-lined stanzas, the alternate lines rhyming. Alliteration is freely used, but not according to any regular plan as in the earlier poems. Various editions and translations of them have been issued and have been received with delight by all lovers of poetry. For a translation of *Pearl,* by Mr. Israel Gollancz, Lord Tennyson wrote the quatrain placed at the head of this chapter.

Of the four poems contained in the manuscript, *Pearl* undoubtedly stands highest. Next to it comes *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight,* which is one of the best examples we possess of the Arthurian romances that were so common at this period. It was probably taken from some French original, for the author states that it was long "locked in lettered lore," before he gave it to his countrymen.

Gawayne, the nephew of King Arthur, was one of the favourite figures of mediæval romance. He was distinguished above all the other knights of the Round Table for truth, courage and chastity, as well as for his great personal beauty and wonderful strength. No one could match this "falcon of the month of May" who was so gentle and courtly, yet so terrible on the field of battle. The story of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* tells how Arthur and his Court were feasting at Camelot one New Year's Day, when a knight, "the mightiest that might mount a steed," entered the hall. His hair and his beard were "thick and green as a bush;" his rich dress was green; he rode a green horse, with trappings and harness all of green. He challenged any one of Arthur's knights to "strike him one stroke for another," promising that he would abide the stroke unarmed. Gawayne took up the challenge and smote the knight "so that his fair head fell to the earth, the blood spurted forth, and glistened on the green raiment but the knight neither faltered nor fell; he started forward with outstretched hand and caught the head," then with the head in his hand addressed Sir Gawayne, telling him to seek him at the Green Chapel on the next New Year's Day, and there, according to the covenant made between them, abide, in his turn, a blow. Then he rode away, and "whither he went none knew."

Next comes a beautiful passage in which the poet describes how the year passed away, season succeeding season, until the appointed time came round. Sir Gawayne took a sorrowful farewell of Arthur and his knights, then set out on his quest. "Many a cliff did he climb in that unknown land, where afar from his friends he rode as a stranger. Never did he come to a

stream or a ford, but he found a foe before him, and that one so marvellous, so foul and fell, that it behoved him to fight. So many wonders did he behold that it were too long to tell a tenth part of them." Thus in peril and pain and many a hardship he rode alone till Christmas Eve. At last he saw before him a castle standing in a meadow with a park all about it. Gawayne asked for admittance, and was received with much courtesy. When his name was made known to the lords and ladies assembled they rejoiced greatly to learn that the far-famed Sir Gawayne had come among them. So he stayed at the castle three days, and then, mindful of his quest, asked his host if he could help him to find the Green Chapel. The host promised that a guide should take him thither by the shortest way. It lay so near the castle that there was no need to start until the dawn of the appointed day itself. "Now I thank you for this above all else," said Gawayne, "now my quest is achieved I will dwell here at your will, and otherwise do as ye shall ask." "We will make a covenant," answered the host, "you shall remain at home and I will go out to hunt. Whatsoever I win in the wood shall be yours, and whatever may fall to your share, that shall ye exchange for it"; and Gawayne laughingly agreed.

The next morning the host went forth to hunt. Gawayne remained with the lady of the castle, who made great show of love to him; but he resisted all her advances, keeping true faith with his host. Only, at parting, he received from her a kiss. The lord returned, with many deer that he had killed. These he gave to Gawayne, and received in return the kiss. The next day passed in the same way; at evening Gawayne had two kisses to render in return for a mighty boar. Next day, which was the last of his stay, the lady gave him three kisses, and after much persuasion prevailed on him to accept as a parting gift the green girdle which she wore. It had magic power, she said, for whatever knight was girded with it "no man over heaven can overcome him, for he may not be slain for any magic on earth." For this reason, and not as a love pledge, Gawayne took the girdle.

Next morning he set forth and came by guidance of a servant, to a wild and dreadful place, where he found that a grass-grown mound with a hole at either end was the Green Chapel that he sought. From it came out the Green Knight. Gawayne bared his neck, but as the blow was about to descend he shrank ever so slightly. The knight withheld the stroke and taunted Gawayne with his fear. "At King Arthur's Court," said the Green Knight, "I stood firm to abide your blow. Where is the promise that you made that you in turn would abide mine?" "I shrank once," answered Sir Gawayne, "but so will I no more." Again the Knight feigned to strike, and Gawayne did not flinch. A third time, and the axe touched his neck lightly, so that the blood flowed. Then the Green Knight revealed himself as the lord of the castle, the host at the Christmas revels. Gawayne had been tried, he said, in courage and in loyalty, for it was at the desire of her lord that the lady of the castle had tempted him. Had he not retained the girdle he would have passed the ordeal unhurt; the slight wound was punishment for slight disloyalty. In everything else he had shown himself true knight. "In sooth," said the lord, "I think thou art the most faultless knight that ever trod earth. As a pearl among white peas is of more worth than they, so is Gawayne, i' faith, by other knights." Gawayne, however, could not overlook his one act of unfaithfulness, and bitterly lamented it. He would not return to the castle, but departed sorrowfully for Arthur's court.

The two other poems, *Cleanness* and *Patience*, are of slighter merit and are for our purpose sufficiently described by the titles.

We have no record of the writer or writers of these poems, no mention in any contemporary work, no inscription on the manuscript. All we have to trust to is the internal evidence derived from the poems themselves. From this critics have concluded that all four poems are by the same hand, and have built up a biography of the supposed author, which is probably true in its main outlines, if not in all its details.

The poet was born in Lancashire or the neighbouring district, about 1330. His father was himself neither wealthy nor

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight 66

From the Cotton MS. in the British Museum

well born, but was connected as steward or in some similar capacity with a family of high rank. The boy, therefore, had daily opportunities of becoming familiar with the life led by men of great birth and position. He heard the songs sung by the minstrels in the hall, he watched the hunting parties as they started gaily on a winter's morning, and as he grew older he accompanied them and shared in the sport. He saw the rich dresses of lords and ladies, heard their soft voices, noted the grace and courtesy of all their actions. He learnt what qualities distinguish an ideal knight, and how a high born lady should bear herself as mistress of a great castle.

The boy was educated, and it seems probable that as he grew up he became a clerk, that is, he entered one of the minor orders of the Church. An intensely religious feeling is shown in all his work, and a close acquaintance with Church practices. He did not become a priest, for he married, and one child, a little girl, was born to him. There is no mention of his wife in any of his works ; perhaps his marriage was not a very happy one ; probably, indeed, almost certainly, his wife was dead when he lost his little daughter. Only two years his baby girl stayed with him, but that was long enough for her to gain the whole love of his heart. When she died he was left desolate. Other trials came upon him—poverty, distress, and loss of friends—but his faith never failed him, and the great hope of his life was always that he might see his child again.

Such was the man, we must needs believe, who, out of the glad memories of his early days, wrote *Sir Gawayne*, and after he had been laid low by a great sorrow, transcribed his beautiful vision of *Pearl*. In the evening of his days, when he sat alone, waiting for the time when he should rejoin his " spotless one," he moralized on ' Patience ' and ' Cleanness.' How his life ended—whether he entered a convent, as some have fancied, or died alone in poverty and wretchedness—we do not know. But his work has brought him fame which, though long-delayed, will be lasting, and will grow greater as the gallant Gawayne and the tender lovely Pearl become known to a wider circle of readers.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VISION OF PIERS PLOWMAN[1]

PIERS PLOWMAN, like *Pearl*, is the work of an unknown author. In this case, however, tradition and a few chance references in the literature of the time supplement the inferences gathered from the poem itself. Moreover, in the poem the writer makes several distinct allusions to his own circumstances. Carefully putting together all this evidence we can make our story of the book.

The name of the poet was William Langland. His parents were of lowly birth and position—they may even have been serfs. They lived in the little village of Cleobury Mortimer amongst the Malvern Hills, probably on land belonging to Malvern Priory, which stood in the valley under the Great Hill. Will, their son, born about 1332, was a clever lad, but

[1] *The Vision of Piers Plowman* has, up to quite recent times, been regarded as the work of a single author. Skeat and Jusserand, the two great authorities on the poem, arrived, quite independently, at conclusions concerning its authorship which are, except in small points of detail, identical. On these conclusions the chapter on *Piers Plowman* contained in this book is based. In 1908, however, Professor Manly published in the second volume of the *Cambridge History of Literature* the results of his exhaustive examination of the text of the poem. He has been led to believe that *Piers Plowman* is the work not of one, but of five authors. One, who may be identified with William Langland, wrote the Prologue and Passus I to VIII. Passus IX to XII were, Professor Manly believes, written by a continuator who attempted, with small success, to imitate the style of the earlier part; and the remaining lines by a scribe or minstrel named John But. The second version (or B text, as it is called) he attributes to a fourth writer who was probably a cleric; the third version, or C text, to "a man of much learning, of true piety, and of genuine interest in the welfare of the nation, but unimaginative, cautious, and a very pronounced pedant."

Professor Manly's view is considered by the best authorities on Early English literature to be worthy of very serious consideration, and the investigation opened by him will probably be carefully followed up in the near future.

strange, so the neighbours thought. He was shy and quiet and dreamy in his ways, and had little to do with the sports and frolics of the village boys. The monks at the Priory school found him so apt a pupil that they talked proudly of his attainments to visitors who came to the convent; and so there were friends ready to help the clever boy and lift him from the lowly place his birth had given him. But Will was preparing himself for a future which held little chance of worldly prosperity. He was by nature a dreamer, and even in those early years, when he wandered over the fair hillsides of Malvern, his brain was haunted with visions and perplexed with doubts. Real life as he knew it among the "poor folk in cots" with whom he lived day by day was hard and cruel enough, and the lad was vaguely puzzled to know why this should be so.

> Burdened with children and chief lords' rent,
> What they spare from their spinning they spend it in house hire;
> Both in milk and in meal to make a mess o' porridge,
> To satisfy therewith the children that cry out for food.
> Also themselves suffer much hunger
> And woe in winter time with waking of nights
> To rise 'twixt the bed and the wall and rock the cradle;
> Both to card and to comb, to patch and to wash,
> To tub and to reel, rushes to peel;
> That pity 'tis to read or to show in rhyme
> The woe of these women that dwell in cots.

There were lords and ladies, he knew, whose lives were far different; they had ease and luxury, and good things. Why should the poor man "swynke and sweat and sow for both?" Somewhere truth and righteousness must exist, he knew it by the vague though glowing visions which flashed across his brain. But where could a man find them? How could he, Will Langland, search them out?

So, while he was yet a lad he brooded on the inequalities of life, and his sympathy with the poor folk of the land was kindled. When he climbed to the top of the Great Hill, and looked down on the grassy plain beneath him, where the shining Severn ran, and the bordering hills, covered with gorse and heather and fern, stretched away until they were lost in a blue haze, it was not the beauty of the scene that filled his

mind. For him that "faire felde" was an image of the world. It was "ful of folke."

> Of all manner of men, the mean and the rich,
> Working and wandering as the world asketh,
> Some put them to the plough, full seldom they play,
> In setting and in sowing labour too hard
> And win that which wasters with gluttony destroy.

As he brooded, bit by bit, the vision extended itself, until it grew into a kind of symbolic picture of the life of the time. Again and again he came back to it, and each time his imagination added further details. Soon he began to shape his thoughts into a regular poem, and to write down the verses as he made them. All his experiences were put into it. He told how the poor folk lived, and what they ate, how they talked to each other, and how bravely they bore the hardships of their lot. He told also how the spirit of discontent was growing among them, how they were beginning to realize the oppression from which they suffered, and the corruption of the rulers they were bound to obey. All the vague political talk which was going about from one poor cot to another, and which, thirty years later, was to bring the great rising of the peasants, he faithfully reported. He had many a time heard hard-handed labouring men talk of the king and nobles, and of what might be expected from them; of the Church and how it had fallen away from Truth; and ever more and more clearly he saw that if the lot of the poor man was to be improved it was from himself and his own efforts that the improvement must come. The man who worked was the true hero, for he lived according to truth and righteousness; therefore Langland made a poor ploughman the hero of his tale.

So the vision shaped itself in the mind of the dreaming boy. He saw Flattery, Falsehood, and Guile, in the guise of the rich and noble, mingling with the crowd; and, worst of all, he saw Lady Meed, drawing to herself a large company of followers:

> A wommen wortheli yclothed,
> Hire arraye me ravished, such richness saw I never.

These ruled the world, though Conscience did her best to bring their evil plans to naught. Then Reason preached to the people, bidding them forsake their sins, and turn and ask God's mercy. Truth should deliver them. All were willing to seek for Truth, but where was he to be found? In that great company there seemed to be none who knew him. Many saints they knew, to whose shrines they had made pilgrimages, but none of these was named Truth. Then a ploughman, who was called Piers, stepped forward. He could guide them, he said, to Truth.

> I knowe him as kindly as clerk doth his books:
> I have been his follower for these fifty winters.

He promised to take them on their way when he had finished ploughing his half-acre; for work must not be neglected, all must work if they would find Truth and escape from Hunger. By this time Truth (who is God the Father) had heard of those who were searching for him, and sent them a message of pardon for their sins. But a priest, jealous of the priestly privilege of bestowing pardon, declared the message to be false, and in the strife which arose concerning it, the dreamer awoke.

This, very briefly, is the outline of the story. It is full of teaching concerning the duties of the king, the nobles, and the commons, the loveliness of Truth, and the obligation which lies upon all Christians to love one another. There was, it is evident, in the mind of the young poet, a high and beautiful ideal of what life, worthily lived, should be; and his anger and contempt for those who live unworthily proceeded from his intense longing that men should rise to the heights of which, he felt, they were capable.

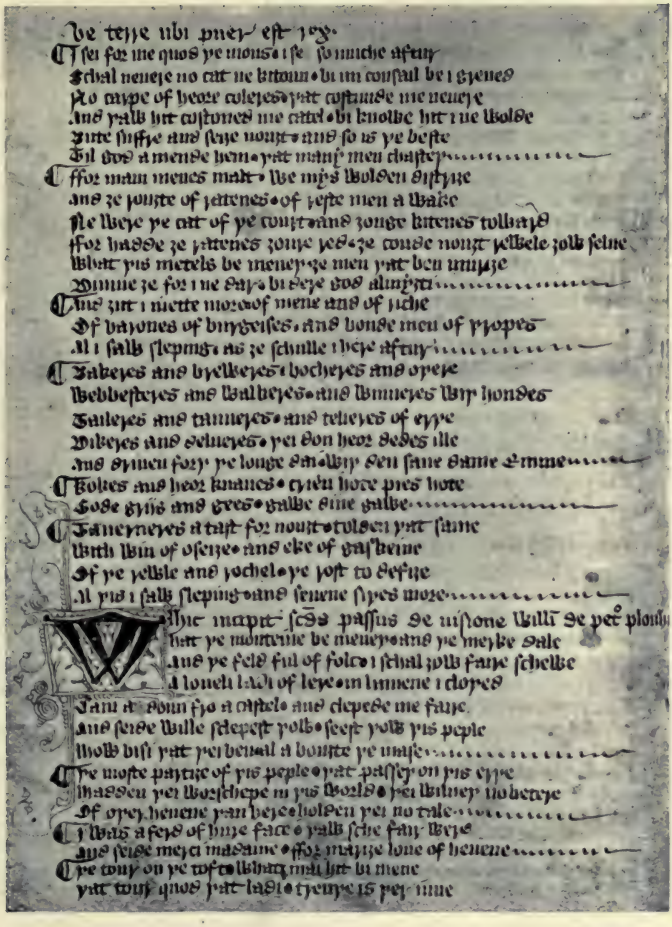
Time went on, and Will grew to be a man. The friends who had interested themselves in his education were still disposed to help him. In those days the best way to advancement for a poor and penniless youth was through the Church. Will must take orders, and his friends would perhaps be able to find for him some preferment. So he became a clerk. But he felt very strongly within himself that life in the quiet Shropshire village could not long content him. He was moody

and restless. He wanted many things which he had not the energy to strive for. "All the sciences under sun and all the subtil crafts, I would I knew and understood well in my heart." But as he goes on to tell us, he was "eager to learn but loth for to study. He was too ready to follow 'Ymaginatif' to give his mind earnestly to any practical work.

Exactly when he left his country home we do not know. He probably spent some time wandering about the country, then came to London. He married, and so cut himself off from all hope of advancement in the Church, for though those who had entered the minor orders only were not forbidden to take wives, there could be no married priests. We know nothing about Langland's wife, except that her name was Katherine, or Kit, as he calls her. A daughter was born to him, whom he named Nicolette or Calote, but of her, too, we know nothing. The three lived together in a little house in Cornhill, near St. Paul's. They were poor—so poor that they sometimes were in want of bread. Langland's poem, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, had been finished by this time, and was widely known all over the country, so that many of the poor folk had learnt it by heart, and passed it on from one to another by word of mouth. But it brought in little money, and Langland's earnings in other ways were small. He acted as a chantry priest, that is, he sang masses for the repose of the souls of the dead, he copied manuscripts and wrote out legal documents. Of his life at this time he tells us:

> And I live in London, and on London both,
> The lomes [utensils] that I labour with and livelihood deserve
> Is Paternoster and my primer, placebo and dirige,
> And my psalter sometimes and my seven psalms;
> Thus I sing for the souls of such as me helpen,
> And those that find me my food.

"It requires no great stretch of imagination," says Professor Skeat, "to picture to ourselves the tall, gaunt figure of Long Will in his long robes and with his shaven head striding along Cornhill, saluting no man by the way, minutely observant of the gay dresses to which he paid no outward reverence." He tells us that "he was loath to reverence lords or ladies, or



Page of the MS. of "Piers Plowman" showing the end of the First Canto and the beginning of the Second 72

From the Cotton MS. in the British Museum

persons dressed in fur or wearing silver ornaments; he never would say 'God save you' to serjeants whom he met, for all of which proud behaviour, then very uncommon, people looked upon him as a fool."

Somewhere about 1377 it is probable that Langland began a new version of his poem. The nation was at this time in a dissatisfied and uneasy state. The Black Prince was dead. Edward III was entirely under the influence of evil advisers, the heir to the throne was a child of twelve. Langland roused himself to a fresh effort. He knew now something of the sorrows of the poor of London, as well as of those who lived among the Malvern Hills. He added to his poem until it was three times the length it had been at first. Almost all the additions that he made increased the value of the work. His version of the well-known fable of the rats who wanted to bell the cat, now appeared in the poem for the first time.

In this second version of his poem Langland made a great change in the character of his ploughman hero. At first he had been simply an honest, God-fearing peasant, whose singleness of purpose stood out in strong contrast to the falsehood and self-seeking of those around him. But now he became a type of perfected human nature, until at last he came to stand for the God-Man, Jesus Christ. He had been a seeker after Truth, he was now Truth itself.

The poem in its new form became almost a gospel to the discontented peasantry, who were in the dangerous restless state which comes before open rebellion. Piers Plowman they made their hero, the typical working man, who stood for all that was best in their own order. In 1381 came the great Peasant Revolt under Wat Tyler. Langland himself had nothing to do with this, and there was nothing in his poem which can be said to have encouraged it. He taught that strife should end and love should reign between different classes of men, that the king should care for his people and the people should trust their king. But because he exalted a ploughman above rulers and nobles, the popular voice acclaimed him as a teacher of rebellion.

The rising of the peasants failed, and we can imagine how Langland, grieved over the fate of those his poor brothers, on whom punishment had fallen. The case of the peasant seemed more hopeless than ever. Fresh burdens were put upon him, a harder, sterner hand held him down. The misery of it all must have overwhelmed the poet who, from his boyhood, had suffered in the sufferings of his brethren and who had longed so earnestly for better things. In his poor London home, almost within sight of the destruction which the disastrous rising had caused, he grew ever sadder and more hopeless. His only consolation was the poem which had been the work of his youth and which now, in his old age, he set himself to rewrite once more. This third version was probably begun about 1390. Langland looked back over his past life, recalling as those who are growing old love to do, the scenes of his earlier days. These he described in his poem, with power still, but power weakened by garrulousness and occasional irrelevance. Before the work was finished he seems to have left London. Where the rest of his life was spent, and whether with his wife and daughter, or quite alone, we have no means of knowing. In a contemporary poem, *Richard the Redeles*, that has been thought to be by Langland, the author says that in 1399 he was at the City of Bristol. This is the last trace that can be found, though a vague tradition which we should like to believe, says that he came back to the old Priory among the Malvern Hills to die.

CHAPTER IX

THE CANTERBURY TALES

WE have seen how *Piers Plowman* represents the work of its author's whole life, how he put into it all that he had seen and heard and thought and felt from boyhood to age. Quite as truly, the *Canterbury Tales* may be said to constitute the life-work of Chaucer. He did not, it is true, work at the poem through long years, altering, adding, and retouching. It is probable that no word of the work was written until Chaucer was nearing fifty, and that it was finished in at most four or five years. But his whole life had been a preparation for it. Through all his crowded busy years he had been storing up the impressions that his quick brain had registered: he had been learning to know the men and women of the world around him, and to know them so well that he could re-create them in the manner as they lived, and set their living, breathing semblances before his readers. He had been learning, too, the wide charity, which could teach his keen, observant eye and mirthful spirit to look upon the weaknesses and foibles of men with kindly indulgence and to laugh at them without bitterness. The technique of his art he had learnt by the best of all methods—practice. He had read, translated, and imitated works of classic fame and works of his own day. We need only read the first few lines of the *Prologue* to realize the difference between his verse and that of Langland and the author of *Pearl*. Freedom and ease have come with the final casting off of the bonds which the rigid scheme of Anglo-Saxon verse had bequeathed to Chaucer's Middle English predecessors. The influence of French models has given

lightness and grace, the poet's own genius has given the verse harmonies which sound all through his work.

The story of the *Canterbury Tales*, therefore, must include some account of the life of Geoffrey Chaucer. We must watch the artist gathering his materials and find out, as far as this is possible, how the skill with which they are used was gained.

Our story begins in London about the year 1340. Geoffrey Chaucer, we believe, was born in Thames Street, in a house that stood beside the little stream of Walbrook, which at that time flowed down from Finsbury Moor to the Thames. His father was John Chaucer, vintner, a citizen of wealth and standing who had, at the time of his son's birth, but lately returned from Flanders, where he had gone in attendance on Edward III and Queen Philippa. By the side of London's great river, then a busy highway of trade, the poet grew up. While Will Langland, a moody, restless youth, was wandering solitary over the Malvern Hills, the little lad, Geoffrey Chaucer, was taking his childish part in the busy life of a great city. Lingering in his father's shop, he saw the citizens of various qualities coming in for their draught of wine, and heard their solemn talk over civic affairs, and the state of trade. He saw strange ships coming up the Thames, bringing goods from other lands, and men who looked and spoke in a way that seemed to him curious and uncouth; like the shipman "woning (dwelling) far by weste" of whom he gives a portrait in the famous *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*, who "knew wel alle the havens, as thei were, From Scotland to the cape of Fynestere, And every creek in Bretayne and in Spain." Sometimes, perhaps, the boy went with his father to the Hall of the Hanse Merchants, where sober men with "forked berds" wearing "Flaundrish bever hats spak full solempnely" concerning the "encrease of their wynnyngs" or denounced the pirates who infested the seas between England and the Continent. No part of this experience was lost on him, though he probably gave little sign of the keen interest he felt in all he saw and heard. His father's friends very likely regarded him as a quiet,

harmless boy who gave little trouble, and 'sat still' longer than boys are wont to do. They were not warned by the humorous twinkle in the quiet boy's eye, and did not know that they were sitting for their portraits for all posterity.

Time went on, and young Geoffrey Chaucer was sent to school, probably to the cathedral school of St. Paul's. He was, we expect, a good scholar, and a source of pride to his master, though he may have been too shy to take part in the proceedings when "upon festival days the masters made solemn meetings in the churches, where their scholars disputed logically and demonstratively; . . . the boys of diverse schools did cap or pot verses, and contended of the principles of grammar; there were some which on the other side with epigrams and rymes, nipping and quipping their fellows and the faults of others, though suppressing their names, moved thereby much laughter among their auditors." Out of school there were many sports in which he might join with his schoolfellows—ball and baton, or running at the quintain set up in Cornhill; or in winter, "when the great fen or moor which watereth the walls of the city on the north side;" was frozen, taking part in the play going on there,—"some, striding as wide as they may, do slide swiftly; others make themselves seats of ice, as great as millstones, one sits down, many hand in hand to draw him, and one slipping on a sudden, all fall together; some tie bones to their feet and under their heels, and shoving themselves by a little picked staff, do slide as swiftly as a bird flieth in the air, or an arrow out of a cross-bow." Perhaps Geoffrey Chaucer liked, almost better than anything else, to sit outside his father's shop in the summer twilight, particularly on festival days like the Eve of St. John, and watch how the flames of the bonfires that had been kindled at intervals down the street, lit up the faces of the citizens as they stopped to taste the "sweet bread and good drink" which John Chaucer, like others of the 'wealthier sort' had set out on a table before his door, "whereunto they would invite their neighbours and passengers also to sit and be merry with them in great familiarity, praising God for his benefits bestowed on them."

Then there were the May-day sports, the Midsummer Watch, the Christmas mummings, the pageants, processions and miracle-plays. The life led by the Londoners of the Middle Ages was, at least on one of its sides, a merry one, full of colour and life. Their homes were comfortless, and a long spell of bad weather —such as that which came when Geoffrey Chaucer was about nine years old, when it rained from Midsummer to Christmas—must have reduced them to despair. But such discomforts only made them the more eager to get all the enjoyment they could from the outdoor life, when this was possible.

To the son of the rich vintner London life showed itself under its most pleasant aspect. He lived, naturally, in an atmosphere of busy prosperity. His father's friends were mostly sober folk, but they had sons and daughters, and there was probably a good deal of laughter and blithe merrymaking among the youths and maidens. The comedy of life was spread out before Chaucer, with its ordinary people, its everyday humours, its unheroic incidents. It is thus that he best loved to regard it, though, at the same time, he could rise to heroic heights when the " crowded hour of glorious life " came to him. Nor did tragedy lie outside his keen human sympathy, and in the London streets, then as now, there were tragedies to be seen by those whose eyes were open to note them. It was perhaps in his boyhood, perhaps in later life, that Chaucer saw some poor, pale, trembling wretch, followed by a savage, yelling crowd, dragged to meet the summary justice of those rough days; and the glimpse that he had of the doomed man's face so impressed itself on his mind that years afterward he could convey something of its terror to his readers:

> Have ye not seen some time a palë face,
> Among a press of him that hath been led
> Toward his death, where as him gat no grace,
> And such a colour in his face hath had,
> Men mightë know his face that was bestead
> Amongës all the faces in that rout.

At what time Chaucer's school life ended we do not know. Some of his biographers think that he went to one of the

Universities, pointing to the knowledge that he had of University customs, and to his portrait of the 'clerk of Oxenford' who "had but a litel gold in cofre: But al that he might of his frendes hente, On bookës and his lernyng he it spent," in support of their conjecture. If he did he must have ended his stay there at an age which was young even for the Middle Ages, when students of thirteen and fourteen were common at the Universities; for in the early part of the year 1357, and probably for some time previously, he was a member of the household of the Duke of Clarence. His father had, we suppose, enough influence at Court to procure for his son the advantage of a training in a great household—an advantage very highly esteemed in those days. For the vintner's house and the London streets were now substituted the crowded palace, and a succession of brilliant scenes of Court life as the Duchess and her train moved in semi-royal progresses through the country.

Chaucer probably held the position of page, whose duty was to give personal attendance to his lady both indoors and out. In the long winter evenings the pages often read aloud to the assembled household, usually from some religious work, or from the romances which were so immensely popular at the period. We can imagine how Chaucer must have delighted in this duty when a happy chance gave him such a romance as *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*, or *Aucassin and Nicolette* to read, and we can see how the memory of such romances influenced his work in several of his *Canterbury Tales*. But at this time the romance literature had reached its highest point, and was rapidly declining. The favourite romances of the late fourteenth century were long, stilted, tedious effusions, and it is difficult to see how anyone could have taken much interest in them. But poor Geoffrey Chaucer must needs read them, if his noble mistress so willed, and we can see him, as night after night he took up the thread of some interminable, high-flown story—his sly glance round to test the appreciation of his audience, the half-amused impatience which he must hide under an outward appearance of courteous interest. But he

remembered these long-winded romances, and when, years afterward, he made fine sport of them in his *Tale of Sir Thopas*, he put into the mouth of the host of the Tabard Inn his long-delayed but not less lively criticism :

> " No more of this, for Goddës dignitee ! "
> Quoth our Hostë, " for thou makest me
> So wery of thy very lewëdnesse
> That, also wisly God my soulë blesse,
> Myn eerës aken of thy drasty speche.
> Thy drasty ryming is not worth a flye ;
> Thou dost nought else but spendist al our tyme."

In *Long Will*, a novel which deals with the days of Langland and Chaucer, the author has imagined a meeting between the two poets on the Malvern Hills, on the occasion of the train of the Duchess of Clarence stopping for a few nights at Malvern Priory. It is not impossible that such a meeting did take place, though we must fear that it is improbable. Coincidence can scarcely be trusted to have brought about an event so altogether interesting and delightful; but there could be few exercises of the imagination more helpful to the student in forming a conception of the spirit and temper of the two poets, than to picture for himself such a meeting.

Chaucer did not long remain in the service of the Duchess. In the autumn of 1359 he was with the army of Edward III in France. He was taken prisoner, and released, in 1360, by the Treaty of Bretigny, on payment of a ransom. He probably returned at once to England. It is difficult to think of Chaucer as a soldier—perhaps he was employed in some other capacity. In any case, his short military experience was of great value to him. It helped him to describe his " verray parfit gentil knight," and to add little details which give an air of reality to his descriptions of various encounters.

The history of the next ten years of Chaucer's life has to be gathered from scanty notices contained in official documents, and from references in his own works. These seem to show that he entered the royal household as " valet of the King's Chamber " soon after 1360, and that while he held this position

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Chaucer reading to Edward III] 80

Ford Madox Brown

Photo. W. A. Mansell & Co.

he fell desperately in love with a lady whose high rank made his suit hopeless. Like Palamon, in his *Knighte's Tale*, he complains :

> Thy fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly,
> And but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
> That I may seen her attë lestë weye
> I nam but deed ; there nis no more to seye.

Some part of the fervour of the language which he uses in his poems written at this time is probably due to the fashion of the day. The necessity which the laws of chivalry laid upon every true knight of professing a profound devotion to the lady of his love had had a great influence on literature ; and the Courts of Love—assemblies of knights and ladies that laid down exact rules as to the behaviour and duties of a lover—had made it incumbent on every poet to write in high-flown, exaggerated style of his lady's beauty and his own passion. The Courts of Love were introduced into England from France, and French influence was at this time at its height in England. Chaucer, living as he did in the very centre of Court influence, was largely affected, as is seen in all the poems he wrote at this period, which is commonly known as his French period.

The opening of the next decade saw the poet entering upon a new series of experiences. Between 1370 and 1380 he was sent on seven diplomatic missions to various countries of Europe. A journey which he made to Italy in 1372 was the most important of these. He was absent nearly twelve months, and visited several Italian cities. At this time Petrarch was living in a small village near Padua, and the early biographers of Chaucer state that a meeting took place between the two poets. There is no reliable evidence that this was so, though it seems highly probable. Chaucer, with all the enthusiasm of a poet conscious of the power to do greater things than any he had yet done, would naturally be anxious to see the older poet who, at nearly seventy years of age had such a splendid record behind him, not only of works that he had written but of service rendered in searching out and bringing to light the great works

of early classical literature. In the *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer makes his Clerk of Oxenford say :

> I will you tell a talë, which that I
> Lerned at Padowë of a worthy clerk,
> Y provëd by his wordës and his werk.
> He is now ded, and naylèd in his chest,
> I pray to God so yeve his soulë rest !
> Fraunces Petrark, the laureat poète,
> Hightë this clerk, whose retorickë swete
> Illumynd al Ytail of poetrie. . . .
> But forth to tellen of this worthy man,
> That taughte me this tale.

There has been a general belief that in these words Chaucer was referring to his own experiences. The tale is the beautiful story of Griselda, a version of which Petrarch wrote in Latin.

Soon after Chaucer's return from this mission it is probable that he married Philippa, one of the ladies of the Queen's Chamber, who was not the lady of his early love. We know nothing about her, except through references in official documents, and nothing at all about their married life. In 1374 the Corporation of London granted to Chaucer a lease for his life of " the whole of the dwelling-house above the gate of Aldgate, with the rooms built over, and a certain cellar beneath the same gate." A lucrative Court appointment and a pension were given to him, and, with a comfortable income, he settled down to the quiet, studious life which he loved far better than the busy and brilliant scenes in which, so far, the greater part of his time had been of necessity passed. Not far away Langland in his poor house on Cornhill was living hardly and toiling at work which was distasteful to him, and, through all, building up his great poem. Chaucer, too, was busy ; he was producing work which showed in a very marked manner the influence of his stay in Italy, and of the study of Italian literature which the visit had inspired. When the work that his appointment required was done he came back to his rooms at Aldgate, and there in the city he loved, with the sounds of busy life coming up from the street below and giving him the sense of human companionship that was so necessary to him, he sat

down to study and to write. He says of himself in his *House of Fame:*

> Thou herest neyther that nor this,
> For when thy labour doon al ys,
> And hast made al thy rekennynges,
> Instede of reste and newë thynges,
> Thou goost home to thy house anoon,
> And, al so domb as any stoon,
> Thou sittest at another booke,
> Tyl fully dasewyd ys thy looke,
> And lyvest thus as an heremyte,
> Although thyn abstynence ys lite.

In this last line Chaucer, in his own characteristic manner, pokes sly fun at himself. His "abstinence is little," he is no ascetic, but enjoys all the good things of this world, including good things to eat and drink.

This quiet life was not uninterrupted. Other missions, followed by other grants and rewards, were undertaken from time to time. He does not seem to have gone abroad after 1380, but the duties of his various appointments kept his time well occupied at home. In 1386 the tide of his good fortune turned. King Edward III had died in 1377, and the young king was in the hands of guardians. Of these John of Gaunt had always been Chaucer's great friend and supporter; but now John of Gaunt was abroad, and the Duke of Gloucester was at the head of affairs. He regarded Chaucer as a supporter of the party opposed to his own, and dismissed him from his posts. Soon we find Chaucer in money difficulties, raising small sums on the two pensions that remained to him—though these also two years after were taken away. In 1387 his wife died. Yet in this, the darkest hour of his life, he lost neither courage nor energy. In the midst of poverty and distress he began his *Canterbury Tales*, the greatest of all his works.

The worst pressure of poverty was removed when, in 1389, the Lancastrian party was restored to power, and Chaucer was appointed Clerk of the King's Works at Westminster. Other small appointments and pensions followed, but the poet seems never again to have been in comfortable circumstances. Perhaps in the dark years from 1386 to 1389 he had become

so deeply involved in debt that he was unable to clear himself. However this may be, the last ten years of his life were undoubtedly shadowed by poverty, and probably by ill-health. The brilliant, successful days were over, but the poet did not sit down and sigh for what he had lost. He did better than that; by the power of his imagination he recreated the past, and in his lonely rooms above the Aldgate gateway he called up around him the figures which had been familiar to his boyhood and earlier manhood, and gave to them a certain immortality. All that he had learnt of men, of life, and of books, all that he had felt, and enjoyed, and suffered, all the unquenchable fun and humour that had survived his troubles, all the fine charity and mellow judgment that years had brought, these the genius of the poet wrought into his great crowning, representative work.

The French and Italian influences which had so strongly affected Chaucer's earlier poems had by this time lost their predominance and become only single elements in the whole vast mass of memories that were shaping his work. The *Canterbury Tales* are entirely English in tone and spirit. The main idea of the framework is essentially English. Twenty-nine pilgrims, bound for the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, meet at a London inn. They agree to travel together, and agree, also, at the suggestion of the host, each to tell two stories to enliven the way. Only twenty-four of the stories were written, and these, with the wonderful *Prologue*, make up the *Canterbury Tales*. It is interesting to consider each of the characters and each of the stories in connexion with the known facts of Chaucer's life and to note the wonderful skill with which he has used the material that his varied experience has provided.

He gives us, incidentally, a portrait of himself in his later years, for he himself is one of the pilgrims whom he represents as taking part in that memorable ride. The host of the Tabard Inn thus addresses him:

> Oure Host to japë then bigan
> And then at erst he lokëd upon me,
> And saydë thus: "What man art thou?" quoth he.

" Thou lokest as thou woldest fynde an hare,
For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.
Approchë near, and lokë up merily.
Now ware you, sirs, and let this man have place.
He in the waist is shape as wel as I;
This were a popet in an arm to embrace
For any woman, smal and fair of face.
He semeth elvish by his countenance,
For unto no wight doth he daliaunce."

Chaucer, it seems, had grown portly as the years had gone on. His retiring habits had been strengthened, and he went about, avoiding as far as possible the notice of his fellows. But his interest in life had not decreased, and his downcast eyes were as keenly observant as they had ever been.

The *Canterbury Tales* were probably begun in 1388, and as each was finished it was given to the public. The tales won immediate popularity. Chaucer's fellow poets recognized that a greater than themselves had arisen, and they gave him warm and generous praise. Nothing like this had been seen before in England; even Chaucer's own earlier works could not compare with his latest achievement. Here was true poetry, breadth of movement, free and generous character-painting. A new era in the history of poetry had opened, a way had been made in which other men might follow. The sky was bright with promise of a great time to come.

At the end of 1399 Chaucer removed from his Aldgate dwelling to a house in the garden of the Chapel of St. Mary, Westminster, and here, less than a year afterward, he died. As far as we know he left no descendants; his one son, Lewis, probably died young. Chaucer was buried in Westminster Abbey, and about two hundred years later a monument was erected to his memory, which was the beginning of what is now known as " Poet's Corner."

Fifty manuscripts of the *Tales* are known to be in existence at the present time. Not one of these copies was made in Chaucer's lifetime, but several date from the fifty years that followed his death. Caxton printed the *Canterbury Tales* at his press at Westminster in 1478 and again in 1483. In his preface to this edition he praised the book with great warmth. " He

(Chaucer) excelleth in my opinion," he wrote, " all other writers in English ; for he writeth no void words, but all his matter is full of high and quick sentence."

Chaucer continued to be held in high esteem until toward the end of the sixteenth century. His fame declined steadily throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although during that period he received generous appreciation from the poet Dryden, whose pronouncement, " Here is God's plenty," still stands, by virtue of its terseness and comprehensiveness, first among all the critical judgments that have been passed upon the *Canterbury Tales*. There seemed to be a chance that the works of our first great English poet would pass into the ranks of the unread books, which are only remembered because they once were famous. But toward the end of the eighteenth century came a change. A new edition of Chaucer's works was published by Thomas Tyrwhitt, and this gave a great impulse to Chaucerian study. During the nineteenth century Chaucer regained his former position, and stands now, by common consent, in the very front rank of great poets, with Shakespeare, Milton and Spenser.

CHAPTER X

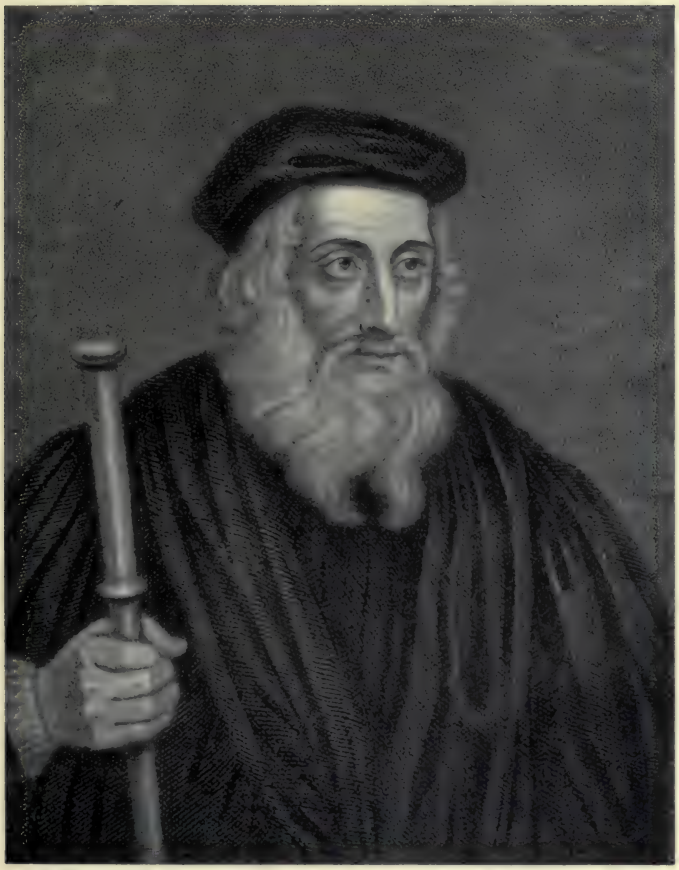
WICLIF'S BIBLE

THERE is no work which has had such an immense influence on the language and literature of England as the English translation of the Bible. From the sixteenth century onward it has coloured both the literary diction of our great writers, and the common speech of the people. Milton's style may be said to be founded upon it. Ruskin declared that any excellences his own prose writings possess are due to the fact that his mother made him, during his boyhood, read the whole Bible through every year, and learn large portions by heart. It is seldom, indeed, that one can read even a few pages of any great author without being able to trace the influence of the Bible either in the phraseology or the turns of the sentences. In the everyday speech of ordinary people there is a large, unconscious admixture of Biblical language, which marks how thoroughly the English Bible has become the property of the English nation. As a piece of literature, entirely apart from its supreme value as the sacred book of the Christian religion, the Bible holds a unique and remarkable position.

Many names are connected with the story of the English Bible, and one of the most honoured of these is John Wiclif. Wiclif, like Chaucer, belonged to that great awakening period of the fourteenth century when it seemed as if the mental habits of the Middle Ages were breaking up, and new ideals, new methods, and new standards were to take the place of the old. The movement, as we shall see, died out, but the work of Wiclif as well as the work of Chaucer remained, and exercised a great and lasting influence on the literature of succeeding ages.

Nothing in Wiclif's early life gave any promise of the work he was to do in his later years. He belonged to an old and wealthy north country family, and was born about 1324. He went to the University of Oxford, where he greatly distinguished himself, and when he was about thirty-five he became Master of Balliol College. Soon he was known as the foremost of the Schoolmen. The great educational movement of the Middle Ages was Scholasticism, which began to emerge from earlier systems in the eighth century, reached its height in the thirteenth, then gradually died away until the Renaissance brought it to extinction. It consisted in the study of early Latin philosophic writings, and the application of the principles laid down in these to the teaching of the Church. If the two would not readily agree, they were commented upon and their meaning twisted until it was possible to fit them into the accepted scheme. Naturally such a system gave rise to endless arguments on minute points, and the man who could best follow out a long and complicated chain of reasoning in which the finest distinctions were made and the subtlest of arguments introduced was accounted the best scholar. To do this adequately, it must be remembered, required an acquaintance with almost all that it was then possible to learn of science, mathematics, and literature. But the splitting of straws sometimes reached a point where it became not only futile, but absurd. We are told, for example, that these grave and learned Schoolmen, arguing upon the nature and constitution of the angels, occupied themselves in a profound discussion as to how many of these beings could stand on the point of a needle.

Among these subtle metaphysicians Wiclif, as has been said, stood first. His fine keen mind delighted in matching itself against other minds in strenuous logical exercises, and for a time this seems to have occupied a great part of his energies. But soon his study of the Scriptures and of ecclesiastical matters gave him more serious and engrossing subjects of thought. Here were questions of living interest, involving men's welfare in this world and in the world to come. The Church on earth



John Wiclif

was very far from the ideal state which, theoretically, was hers. Greed, oppression and corruption sullied her, and she had ceased to fulfil her great mission. Wiclif turned from subtle disquisitions on abstract subjects to the consideration of the practical abuses of his time.

The great fight, which was to go on throughout the last twenty years of Wiclif's life, began. He was not the first fighter, but he was the strongest and most determined that had yet appeared. His frail body, worn by study and discipline, matched but ill his strong and resolute spirit. He was, says one of his followers, "held by many the holiest of all in his day, lean of body, spare and almost deprived of strength, most pure in his life." He faced not only the thunders of the Pope, but the yells and shouts of angry mobs with a fine courage; and never wavered in the position which he had taken up. A band of devoted followers gathered round him, for he seems to have possessed that personal charm which is so often a characteristic of leaders in great movements. Some of his friends were powerful enough to give him valuable protection, and chief of these was John of Gaunt, though in his case it was not any special care for Wiclif and his work which supplied the motive, but, rather, considerations of policy. It is not proposed to tell here in detail the story of Wiclif's long struggle: how from criticizing the practice of the Church he advanced to a criticism of her doctrine, and so lost his most powerful friends; how he organized his band of 'Poor Priests,' and sent them throughout England to teach the pure word of God; how the band of 'Lollards' as his followers were mockingly called, increased in numbers and in enthusiasm. All these things belong to history, but not to the history of Wiclif's Bible. We will take up the story at the point when Wiclif, expelled from Oxford and condemned by the Archbishop's Council, settled down in his little parish of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, retiring for a breathing-space from the thickest of the conflict.

The days of active fighting were over, but Wiclif's work was not yet done. The old man of sixty had yet to accomplish that which, of itself, would have sufficed to make his name

famous throughout the ages. For many years he had earnestly desired that the Bible might be rendered into the native tongue of the people. Christ, said Wiclif, when he was on earth with his disciples "taughte hem oute this prayer (the Lord's Prayer) bot be thou syker, nother in Latin, nother in Frensche, bot in the langage that they used to speke." When, therefore, a time of comparative leisure came to him, he eagerly took up the work of translation. Several of his followers were with him at Lutterworth. There was John Purvey, his curate, who had several times suffered persecution and imprisonment for what the Church called his heretical opinions. There was Nicholas Hereford, a scholar, who had worked with Wiclif at Oxford, and like him had been cited before the council at London; and there were others of less note. The translation was the joint work of the band, and it is probable that Wiclif himself only translated a part of the New Testament. But he was the inspiration of all that was done, and the resulting version of the Scriptures may with justice be called, Wiclif's Bible.

The English were at this time not entirely without native versions of the Scriptures. The earliest of these was Cædmon's paraphrase (*see* p. 26), which belongs to the seventh century. Alfred the Great, in the ninth century, translated the Psalms, the Commandments, the 21st, 22nd, and part of the 23rd chapters of Exodus. Other versions of the various parts of the Bible—the Gospels, the Pentateuch, and the historical books—were probably in existence before the Conquest, judging from the evidence of the literature of the time, but these have been lost. In the twelfth or early thirteenth century, Orm, a monk of the order of Augustine, wrote a metrical version of the Gospels and the Acts, which extended to 20,000 lines. This is known as *Orm's Ormulum*. Early in the fourteenth century William of Shoreham translated the Psalms, of which several other versions had been made by unknown authors during the century preceding.

All these translations Wiclif might have had to help him in his work, but we do not think he consulted any of them.

His translation was made from the Vulgate, the Latin version of the Bible made by St. Jerome about 383. Neither Wiclif nor his disciples understood the original Greek or Hebrew. Latin was the language of the Schoolmen; Greek came only with the Renaissance. The translation was designed for simple and unlearned men, and this the translators seem to have kept well in mind throughout. The language is simple and vigorous, the true language of the people, though it sometimes becomes awkward and stilted by following too closely the idiom of the Latin original. Their rendering of part of Psalm VIII may be given as a specimen:

> 1. Lord oure Lord; hou myche mervellous is thi name in al the erthe.
> 2. For rered up is thi grete doing, over hevenes.
> 3. Of the mouth of unspekende childer and soukende thou performedist preising, for thin enemys; that thou destroye the enemy and the ventiere.
> 4. For I shal see thin hevenes, the werkis of thi fingris; the mone and the sterris, that thou hast founded.

For the last two years of Wiclif's life (1382–1384) he was, one of his early biographers tells us, partially paralysed. But in spite of this the amount of work he is known to have done is enormous. Tract after tract was issued and sent through the country, written in the homely, vigorous prose characteristic of him. His sermons and his duties at the parish church were not neglected. He died on the last day of the year 1384.

After Wiclif's death it is probable that John Purvey undertook a revision and retranslation of the Bible, at which they had worked together. This version is freer in its style than the previous one, and is not such an absolutely literal translation of the Latin. The method employed is set down by the translator in his very interesting preface. "A simple creature," he says, "hath translated the Bible out of Latin into English. First this simple creature had much travail, with divers fellows and helpers to gather many old Bibles and other doctors' and common glosses, and to make one Latin Bible some deal true; and then to study it anew, the text with the gloss and other doctors as he might get, and specially Lire (Nicholas de

Lyra, a celebrated commentator on the Scriptures) on the Old Testament, that helped full much in this work; the third time to counsel with old grammarians and old divines, of hard words and hard sentences, how they might best be understood and translated; the fourth time to translate as clearly as he could to the sense, and to have many good fellows and cunning at the correcting of the translation."

Both these versions were extensively used among the people, until the growing feeling against Lollardry caused them to be prohibited, because they were the work of Lollard writers. But no very active steps were taken, and many faithful Churchmen possessed copies of the Wicliffite versions of the Holy Scripture. One hundred and seventy manuscripts of Wiclif's Bible are still in existence, testifying to the number which must have been made in the days before printing became common.

CHAPTER XI

THE VOIAGE AND TRAVAILE OF SIR JOHN MANDEVILLE

THE title of 'the father of English prose' is usually given to John Wiclif, but he has a rival in the person of a younger contemporary, the much-travelled and ingenuous Sir John Mandeville, knight. This rival has grown more formidable as time has gone on, especially (though this statement may appear to be in the nature of an Irish bull) since it has been established beyond all reasonable doubt that no such person ever existed. The meaning of this paradox is that critics in modern times have been busily at work on the book, and have been led to appreciate more and more fully the ease, fluency and vigour of the language, and the flexibility which makes it fit for all the various purposes of literary narrative; while at the same time they have discovered such discrepancies between the writer's account of himself and his book, and ascertained facts, as have made them conclude that the Sir John Mandeville who is credited with so many adventures is an altogether fictitious person.

We will, however, take the knight's account of himself as it stands, and make some examination of his book before we proceed to the destructive criticism which, in the nineteenth century, laid low the famous figure that for four hundred and fifty years had been familiar not to England only, but to all Europe. The first book of the *Travels* was sent out from Liège toward the end of the fourteenth century. The author states that his name is Jehan de Mandeville, that he is an English knight, born at St. Albans, that he crossed the sea on Michaelmas Day 1322, and started on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

His travels were extended far beyond their original goal, and he claims to have visited every part of the known world. In 1343 he turned homeward, and on his way was attacked by arthritic gout, which forced him to remain for some time at Liège. He was attended by 'Dr. John,' a physician whom he had previously met at Cairo, and it was at the physician's suggestion that Sir John Mandeville, to beguile the tedium of his illness, wrote a book describing his travels. The book was finished in 1357.

To this account must be added the story of the claim made by a famous physician of Liège who died in 1372. He was known as "Jean de Bourgogne dit à la Barbe." On his death-bed he stated that he was an Englishman, and that his real name was "Messire Jean de Mandeville, Chevalier Comte de Montfort en Angleterre, et Seigneur de l'isle de Campdi et du Chateau Perouse." He had left his country in consequence of having killed "a Count or Earl," and had undertaken a long pilgrimage; this being finished he had settled down at Liège in 1343.

So much for Sir John Mandeville. As for his book it claims to be a guide for pilgrims to Jerusalem, and describes all possible routes by which the Holy City may be reached from Europe. It is written in simple, straightforward narrative style, and it goes on smoothly and easily from point to point. There is no striving after effect, no apparent desire to be instructive, improving or striking; the writer aims only at being entertaining. Yet there is no flippancy and little conscious humour. In quiet, dignified fashion Sir John tells of things that interested him and that he believes will interest his readers.

The book is crammed with stories of every kind, and fragments of every species of learning. There are legends of saints, Scripture narratives, tales of dragons and enchanters, of fabulous beasts and haunted solitudes; there are scraps of natural history, of geology, of botany, of classical learning, of history, of medicine. Each place that he visited had its marvel or its legend. At Jaffa, which is "one of the oldest towns in

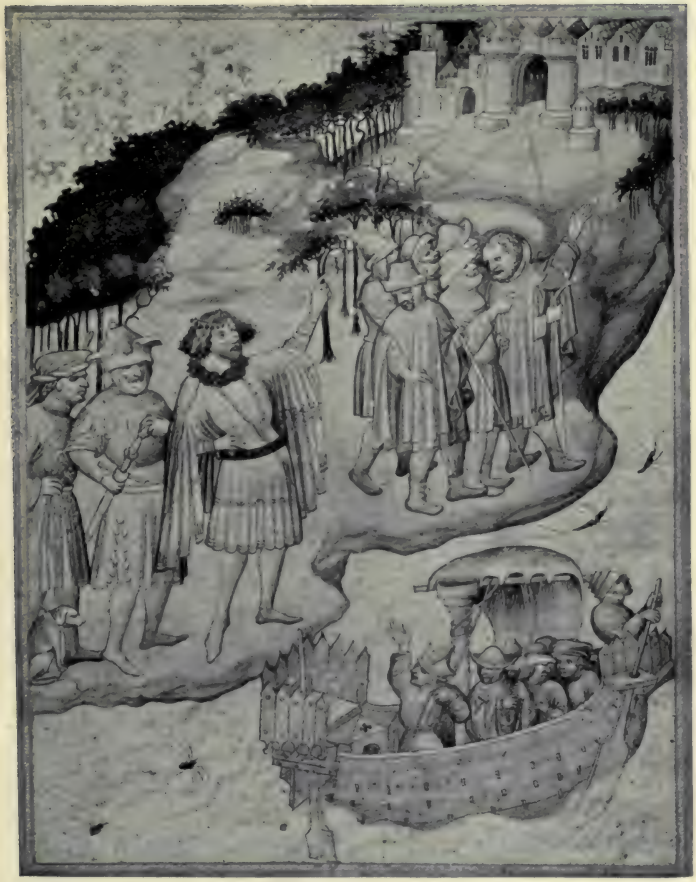
Sir John Mandeville
From a MS. of the XVth century in the British Museum

the world, founded before Noah's flood," Sir John saw marks in the rock "there as the iron chains were fastened that Andromeda, a great giant, was bounden with, and put in prison before Noah's flood, of the which giant is a rib of his side that is forty feet long." In Armenia he heard of the "sparrow-hawk upon a perch, right fair and right well-made, and a fair lady of faerie that keepeth it." Whoever will watch this sparrow-hawk seven days and seven nights, without sleep, his wish, whatever it may be, will be granted him. This, Sir John gravely tells us, he knows to be the truth, for many people have so obtained their desire, and he proceeds to give instances. In Ethiopia he saw folk "that have but one foot, and they go so fast that it is a marvel, and the foot is so large that it shadoweth all the body against the sun when they will lie and rest them." He saw also men with no heads, whose eyes were in their shoulders; men whose faces were flat and featureless, with small round holes for their eyes and mouth; men with underlips so large that they could lie in the sun and draw them over their faces; men who had ears that hung down to their feet, men who had hoofs, like horses. Marvellous trees, too, he found during his travels—trees that bore apples of Paradise, marked with a cross, and others that bore apples of Adam, which had a bite out of the side; trees that bore "very short gourds which, when ripe, men open and find a little beast with flesh and blood and bone, like a little lamb." He tells us of the "field of seven wells" which Christ made with his feet when he went to play there with other children; of the field Floridus, near Bethlehem, which is full of roses, for there a fair maid, who had been wrongfully accused, was taken to be burnt, but when she was brought to the fire, it immediately went out, and the burning brands turned to red rose-trees, those that were unkindled to white, "and these were the first rose-trees, and roses, both white and red, that ever any man saw"; of the garden of Gethsemane, where Christ suffered, and "the Jews made him a crown of the branches of albespine, that is white thorn, and set it on his head, so fast and so sore, that the blood ran down by many places of His visage, and of

His neck, and of His shoulders. And therefore hath the whitethorn many virtues, for he that beareth a branch on him thereof, no thunder ne no manner of tempest may dere (hurt) him; nor in the house that it is in, may no evil ghost enter nor come unto the place that it is in." He tells of the wonderful regions of the great rulers Prester John and the Great Cham, of the fountain of youth, the earthly paradise, the valley of devils, the loadstone mountains. Neither does he neglect the smaller details of the people's everyday life; in Tartary, we are told, "they have no napery ne towels, but if it be before great lords: but the common people hath none"; they do not wash their dishes, eat but once a day, and "live full wretchedly." In Cairo "there is a common house that is full of small furnaces, and thither bring women of the town their eyren [eggs] of hens, of geese, and of ducks for to be put into those furnaces. And at the end of three weeks or a month they come again and take their chickens and nourish them and bring them forth, so that all the country is full of them."

We can imagine with what delight our ancestors received this book, which was put into their hands during the closing years of the fourteenth century. "Ye shall understand," says its author, "that I have put this book out of Latin into French, and translated it again out of French into English, that every man of my nation may understand it." This statement, however, like most of those that the author has made concerning himself and his book, has been proved to be incorrect. Internal evidence shows that the French version was written first; the Latin versions are evidently translations from a French original. But it is true that manuscripts in Latin, French and English were circulated during the last years of the fourteenth century, and these were commonly believed to be the work of Mandeville himself. The work became immensely popular, both in England and on the Continent. There are at the present time three hundred manuscripts in existence, showing how very great was the demand for copies.

But the learning of modern scholars has proved the undoing of Sir John Mandeville. Gradually, the works which were



Pilgrims Setting Out 96

From a MS. of the XVth century in the British Museum
The principal figure (hailing vessel) is probably Sir John Mandeville

open to a mediæval reader—not only great and famous books, but also those of less note—became familiar to critics of a later generation. Curious similarities began to be noticed between the adventures of Sir John and the adventures of earlier travellers. Stories contained in books written several centuries before his time were found to be identical with some of his most famous passages. These things went beyond the limits to which coincidence could extend—here was a clear case of wholesale borrowing. The clue once gained was keenly followed up, with the result that the *Voiage and Travaile* was proved to be simply a compilation from books of all kinds and all dates. Chief among the sources thus recognized are the account of the First Crusade by Albert of Aix, written in the early part of the eleventh century, the itinerary of William of Boldensele, 1336, and various pilgrims' books belonging to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For his pygmies and giants the compiler has evidently gone to classical sources, for his science to Pliny. Scraps have been taken from all possible works of reference, classical and mediæval. Nor has this unscrupulous pilferer been particular as to the use made of his spoils. A note concerning Britain in Cæsar's *Commentaries* has been applied to Ceylon, and statements relating to a condition of things that existed three hundred years before have been boldly brought up to date. Yet, on the whole, the skill with which the compilation has been made is wonderful. The accumulation of material is so cleverly welded together that the reader has no suspicion that the book is not a naturally developed and organic whole.

The question remains as to who really was the author or compiler of the book. The answer must come mainly from the internal evidence the work affords. He was not an Englishman, for he shows no acquaintance with the manners, customs, or physical features of any part of England, while of some matters with which an Englishman would naturally be familiar—such as the English measurements of distance—he is obviously ignorant. He never visited the places he described, for his narrative when closely examined displays

such discrepancies as are quite incompatible with first-hand knowledge. He was a man of education, of wonderfully wide and varied reading, and possessed of a marvellous memory. He was quite free from boastfulness and egotism; he has told us nothing about himself, his appearance, or his prowess. He wrote like a gentleman, with a simple dignity of manner and an entire freedom from coarseness or meanness of thought. This is all that we can say about him, except that he probably lived at Liège, whence the book was sent out some time before 1371. The disappearance of "Sir John Mandeville, Knight," has not, however, affected the value of the *Voiage and Travaile*, and this, though it has lost some of the fascination that it had for earlier readers, has still a characteristic interest and charm.

The Renaissance Period

THE last years of the fourteenth century seemed to promise that a great period of literary activity was at hand. After the death of Chaucer, however, the signs that had been so hopeful gradually died away. No great poet arose to take his place, and his imitators wrote without inspiration. The old sources of stimulus—religion and romance—worked languidly and ineffectively. In all our literary history there is no period so unproductive as the fifteenth century. This unproductiveness is partly due to the long and wasting wars that absorbed the energies of the people. But it is doubtful whether, even under the most favourable circumstances, the spirit that then animated our literature would have been able of itself to produce any very vigorous results. Some impulse from outside was necessary to impart to it new life and energy.

The impulse came through that great awakening movement which during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries stirred the whole of Europe. It is impossible to give any exact account of the causes to which the movement was due. The nations of Europe had reached such a spiritual and mental condition as made them ready for change. They had outgrown the teaching that the Middle Ages could give; mediæval ideals no longer awoke their enthusiasm; they were waiting for new teaching and new ideals. Just at this stage a series of events took place that transformed man's conception of the natural world. Copernicus showed our earth to be a minute portion of a vast universe. Columbus and his fellows opened out upon the earth itself vast and undreamt-of regions for enterprise and adventure. The mighty literature of the ancient Greeks revealed new spiritual and intellectual regions, even more vast.

Men responded eagerly to the stimulus given them, and the tremendous activity that marked the Renaissance period was the result.

In the revival of letters Italy led the way, and her progress was immensely quickened by the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. The company of scholars assembled there fled, carrying with them the precious manuscripts of ancient Greece which had been treasured in the great library of the Eastern capital. Many of these scholars came to Italy, and introduced Greek learning there. Famous schools arose, and students from all parts of Europe gathered at these centres. The cities of northern Italy were specially noted. Thither went English students eager for this hitherto unattainable learning. They brought back to their own country a knowledge of Greek literature, and all the wonderful new ideas that such knowledge had given them. So began the Renaissance in England.

But its progress was slow. The small band of scholars —Thomas More, Colet, Grocyn, Linacre, and a few others —who had received an inspiration from Italy, relied upon learning and culture gradually making their way in the country and transforming national life. They lectured and taught at the Universities, and set themselves to establish schools and centres of learning in different parts of the country. Literature soon showed signs of the new spirit that was at work. Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey brought from Italy the new Italian verse forms, and English poetry entered upon a fresh stage of development. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* is representative of this period—of its noble, yet sober ideals, its delight in culture, its vision of a commonwealth that gave ample time and opportunities for self-improvement.

But before this teaching had taken any hold upon the country, a new development of the Renaissance spirit overthrew it almost completely. The religious ideals of the Continental reformers reached England, and were taken up with the strongest enthusiasm. To More and his friends the work of

Caxton showing the First Specimen of his Printing to Edward IV

Daniel Maclise, R.A.

Luther was hateful. They recognized the abuses of the Church, and worked heart and soul for their removal, but they wished for a quiet and gradual reform, not a violent overturning of established order. They foresaw that in the struggle that must result, the learning they loved would be destroyed, and the country would sink again into intellectual torpor. More suffered death upon the scaffold for his opposition to the new religion, and for a time it seemed as if the New Learning in England had come to an untimely end.

One book, and that a great one, the Protestant Reformation gave us—Tindale's translation of the Bible. The value and influence of this—speaking only from the literary standpoint—can hardly be over-estimated. "It gives to the poor and the unlearned opportunities of the truest culture; it forbids the veriest hind who never left his village, to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilizations, and of a great past stretching back to the furthest limits of the oldest civilizations of the world."[1]

For nearly thirty years the religious strife continued, and absorbed the energies of the nation. Then came the reign of Elizabeth, when a strong settled government was established, and men had time to look around them and think of other things besides their own personal safety. It needed but little to revive the flame that Colet and More and their friends had kindled. From Italy, where all this time the great movement had been going on, came fresh inspiration, and England began once more to attempt literary production. For the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign the efforts made were chiefly experimental and imitative. The publication of Spenser's *Shepheard's Calendar* in 1579 marks the opening of the great period of original production. Its progress may be traced through the great books that, as the years went on, made the reign glorious.

One other outstanding feature of the Renaissance age must be mentioned—the invention of printing. Without this invention the literary treasures which the age produced would have been known only to a comparatively small section of those

[1] Huxley.

who were prepared to receive and delight in them. There is perhaps no event in the history of the world which has had more important and far-reaching consequences. It is impossible to say with certainty with whom the idea of printing originated. Since the earliest years of the fifteenth century workers in various parts of Europe had been striving to put into practical form the idea which had either been conceived independently by each, or had been gained from some master mind, and eagerly passed on from one to another. Progress was slow and halting. Mechanical difficulties had to be overcome, and defects remedied after careful trial. At last, about the middle of the century, a book—the Mazarine Bible—was printed by John Gutenburg at Mainz, and soon other works followed. After this the knowledge of the art spread rapidly, and many improvements in the mechanism of the first rough printing presses were made. In 1476 William Caxton, a native of Kent, who had learnt the new art at Cologne, set up his printing press in the Almonry, Westminster. The first book issued from this press was *The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, and others followed in quick succession. The works of Chaucer, Lydgate, and Mandeville were among the earliest of these; later came *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints*, *Æsop's Fables*, *Le Morte d'Arthur*,[1] and part of Virgil's *Æneid*. Books for which there was a large demand, such as psalters, missals, works on etiquette and cookery were produced in large numbers. Caxton made many improvements in the machinery with which he worked, and in the methods employed. After his death in 1491, his work was continued by his assistant, Wynkyn de Worde.

[1] I haue after the ſymple connynge that god hath ſente to me vnder the fauour and correctyon of al noble lordes and gentylmen enpryſed to enprynte a book of the noble hyſtoryes of the ſayd Kynge Arthur and of certeyn of his knyghtes after a copye vnto me delyuered whyche copye Syr Thomas Malorye dyd take oute of certeyn bookes of frenſſhe and reduced it in to Engliſſhe.—From Caxton's Preface to *Le Morte Darthur*.

CHAPTER XII

UTOPIA

THE first book that the Renaissance gave to England was the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More. It is a book of ideals—ideals of statecraft, of political and social order, of religion, of education, of home life, of dress—of all things, that is to say, that go to make up a perfect state. In its general plan the book is not original; it belongs to a class of which examples can be found in ancient as well as in modern literature. Plato and St. Augustine before Sir Thomas More, and Bacon, Harrington, Lytton, and Mr. H. G. Wells since his time, are among those who have attempted to give us their ideal of a perfect State. In each case the nature of the dream country is decided, first, by the actual existing state of things in the world around him, and secondly, by the writer's own tastes and disposition. He starts from what he knows, and the shortcomings of the actual suggest the perfection of the ideal.

The special interest which attaches to Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* is due to the exceptional nature of these two factors in its making. It was produced at one of the most momentous and wonderful epochs in the history of Europe, when great forces were at work, transforming both life and literature; and it was written by a man who was broadly typical of the little group of Englishmen that first received the inspiration of the Renaissance; who was both courtier and scholar, and who, moreover, possessed those rare personal qualities that are necessary to give any literary work an intimate and individual charm.

During the Middle Ages there had been little or no literature

of the type of the *Utopia*. The *Vision of Piers Plowman* perhaps comes nearest to it; but Langland would have scorned what he would have considered the altogether material ideal of Sir Thomas More. The whole teaching of the time discouraged men from looking for any great joy in this world, except through the medium of religion. They were taught to fix their thoughts upon the world to come, to make that the object of all their aspirations, and all their dreams; to picture an ideal state on earth was almost impious. But with the Renaissance came a different spirit—the spirit of the ancient Greeks. The Greeks had loved beauty—natural, physical, and moral—and the men of Europe learned to love beauty too. They learned to delight in all that pleased the senses and satisfied the emotions. They learned that this life was not to be regarded merely as a passage to the next, but as something which might be, in itself, good and lovely; that it must be lived beautifully, as well as worthily, with the strenuous exercise of all the powers of body, mind and spirit. This sense of the dignity and worth of human life is to be seen in every page of the *Utopia*. The book does not disdain the smallest and most prosaic details which can add to the daily happiness of the ordinary man.

Yet *Utopia* has some qualities which show that the spirit of its author was not entirely at one with the spirit of the age. Of the turbulence of the Renaissance, its restless energy, its impatience of restraint, its spirit of root-and-branch reform, there is no trace. It is true that these qualities were not so noticeable in the early stages of the movement as they were when it had reached its fullest development in the glorious days of Elizabeth. But they were gathering the strength which was, later, to overwhelm More and men like-minded with himself.

For More, though he was a reformer, was no revolutionary. He loved order, peace, seemliness; he hated any kind of confusion, strife, or squalor. He loved the graces of life, he loved mirth and laughter and music; yet he had the temper of the ascetic, and in his early days had seriously purposed

entering the monastery of the Carthusians. "Young Master More" he was called at Oxford, and he kept the name for many years, a tribute to the perpetual youth which seemed to abide with him. "When," said Erasmus, who first met More during his college days, "did Nature mould a character more gentle, endearing and happy than Thomas More's. . . . All things of this world amuse him, even the most serious With men of learning he is ravished by their wisdom, with fools he is delighted at their folly. . . . From childhood he had such a love for witty jests, that he seemed to have been sent into the world for the sole purpose of making them." An extract from the *Life of Sir Thomas More*, by his son-in-law, William Roper, shows the other side of his character. "And albeit he appeared honourably outwardly, and like one of his calling, yet inwardly he no such vanities esteeming, secretly next his body wore a shirt of hair. . . . He used also sometimes to punish his body with whips, the cords knotted, which was known only to my wife, his eldest daughter, whom for her secrecy above all other he specially trusted, caused her, as need required, to wash the same shirt of hair."

It has been said that Sir Thomas More realized his dream of *Utopia*, on a small scale, in his own home. Here he ruled over a busy, peaceful, happy little community, to each member of which he seemed to give something of his own loving and mirthful spirit. When, in 1507, he married his first wife, Jane Colt, of New Hall, Essex, he lived in Bucklersbury; later he built a house at Chelsea, where he spent the rest of his life. In 1514 his wife died, leaving him with three daughters—Margaret, Elizabeth, and Cicely—and one son, John. "A few months after his wife's death," Erasmus tells us, "he married a widow (Alice Middleton), who might take care of his children (the eldest, Margaret, was barely five). She was neither young nor fair, as he would say laughingly, but an active and vigilant housewife, with whom he lived as pleasantly and sweetly as if she had all the charms of youth. You will scarcely find a husband who, by authority or severity, has gained such ready compliance as More by playful flattery. What, indeed, would

he not obtain, when he has prevailed on a woman already getting old, and by no means of a pliable disposition and intent on domestic affairs, to learn to play the harp, the lute, the monochord and the flute, and, by the appointment of her husband, to devote to this task a fixed time every day."

The house at Chelsea was a modest, unimposing building, with a pleasant garden leading down to the river. It was situated close to the place where the statue of Thomas Carlyle now stands. Inside, it was comfortable, even beautiful, and the mode of living, though there was no display, was dignified and liberal. The most generous hospitality was practised. More was not a rich man, but he was a great and successful lawyer, who had built up for himself a lucrative private practice. Later, though much against his will, he occupied high offices in the State. "He tried as hard," his son-in-law tells us, "to keep out of Court as most men try to get into it." King Henry delighted in his company, and would have him always within call. "When Sir Thomas More perceived so much in his talk to delight, that he could not once in a month get leave to go home to his wife and children (whose company he most desired) and to be absent from the Court two days together, but that he should be thither sent for again, he, much misliking this restraint of liberty, began thereupon somewhat to dissemble his nature, and so by little and little from his former mirth to disuse himself so that he was of them from thenceforth no more so ordinarily sent for." Only by this means could More find time to "commune with his wife, chat with his children, and talk with his servants"; which things, he says, he "reckons and accounts among business, for as much as they must of necessity be done, unless a man will be a stranger in his own house."

"In that house," wrote Erasmus, "you will find no one idle, no one busied in feminine trifles. Titus Livius is in their hands. They have advanced so far that they can read such authors and understand them without a translation, unless there occurs some such word as would perhaps perplex myself. His wife, who excels in good sense and experience rather than

in learning, governs the little company with wonderful tact, assigning to each a task, and requiring its performance. His whole house breathes happiness, and no one enters it who is not the better for the visit."

Many visitors came to the pleasant house by the riverside, among them men whose names stand highest among the scholars of the day. There was the gentle Dean Colet, full of enthusiasm for the new school he had lately established at St. Paul's. The children of the house gathered round him to hear stories of the boys who were being brought up at this school under the rule of kindness with which the Dean had replaced the harsh almost barbarous methods common in that age. Such a system was strange to most of the men and women of the day, but it was not strange to the children of Sir Thomas More. The only birch in the house at Chelsea was 'a bundle of peacock's feathers,' and for every stripe their father had given them, they had received from him 'a hundred kisses.' He and the good Dean were at one in their ideas concerning the bringing-up of children.

William Lilly, the grammarian, first head master of the St. Paul's School, came too, and Linacre, the King's physician, and Grocyn, the great Oxford teacher. All these had been friends of Sir Thomas More since his boyish days. Erasmus, the great Greek scholar, each time he came to England, spent many weeks with the friend he had known and loved so well at Oxford. "Erasmus, my darling," More calls him in his letters, and Erasmus does not come behind in expressions of affection, "If he bade me to dance on the tight-rope I should obey without a murmur." It is to Erasmus that we owe a great part of our knowledge of the Chelsea household. The children wrote to him in Latin, telling him all about the birds, monkeys, foxes, ferrets, weasels, and other animals that they kept in the house as pets; about the lessons they had from their tutor, or, best of all, from their adored father, who loved to teach them when he could spare the time from his other duties; about the fool, Henry Paterson, their father's humble and devoted servant, whose jokes sometimes amused and some-

times vexed them; and all the little matters that made up their busy, happy lives.

It is said that Holbein, the great Dutch painter, spent a long period at More's house when he was driven out of Switzerland, and that it is to this visit we owe the portrait group which has made us familiar with the outward appearance of the members of the household. Especially valuable is the presentment it gives of More himself. "The keen, irregular face, the grey, restless eye, the thin mobile lips, the tumbled brown hair, the careless gait and dress, as they remain stamped on the canvas of Holbein, picture the inner soul of the man, his vivacity, his restless, all-devouring intellect, his keen and even reckless wit, the kindly, half-sad humour that drew its strange veil of laughter and tears over the deep, tender reverence of the soul within."

Last in this list of visitors comes King Henry VIII himself. "For the pleasure he took in his company, would his Grace suddenly sometimes come home to his house at Chelsea to be merry with him, whither on a time unlooked for he came to dinner, and after dinner in a fair garden of his, walked with him by the space of an hour, holding his arm about his neck."

As time went on the little society in the house at Chelsea increased in numbers. "There he lives," wrote Erasmus, in a letter of a later date than that already quoted, "surrounded by his numerous family, including his wife, his son and his son's wife, his three daughters and their husbands, with eleven grandchildren. There is not any man living so affectionate to his children as he, and he loveth his old wife as if she were a girl of fifteen. Such is the excellence of his disposition that whatever happeneth that could not be helped, he is as cheerful and as well pleased as though the best thing possible had been done. In More's house you would say that Plato's academy was revived again, only whereas in the academy the discussion turned upon geometry and the power of numbers, the house at Chelsea is a veritable school of Christian religion. In it is none, man or woman, but readeth or studieth the liberal arts, yet is their chief care piety. There is never any

seen idle; the head of the house governs it, not by a lofty carriage and oft rebukes, but by gentleness and amiable manners. Every member is busy in his place performing his duty with alacrity, nor is sober mirth wanting."

Such was the small kingdom of Utopia which Sir Thomas More established on the banks of the Thames. But he was a statesman and a patriot as well as a loving father and a faithful friend. He looked outside the walls of his home, and saw the ills under which his country was suffering. He longed for the time when men should cease to be swayed by their passions, when the weaker should no longer be pitilessly trodden under foot in the greedy rush for the riches which, after all, could not give happiness. He was an ardent disciple of the New Learning, a fervent believer in the innate dignity and worth of man's nature if only it were allowed to develop itself as God intended. Reason, culture, gentleness, persuasion, toleration of other men's opinions and moderation in pushing one's own —these were the means, as he believed, by which the new Golden Age was to be brought to the earth. It was because he held these opinions that he so bitterly opposed the violence of the Protestant reforming party, who, he thought were destroying all the work that Colet and his friends had done, by introducing strife and dissension into religion, and bringing men's minds into a new bondage when they had with pains escaped from the old.

Had Sir Thomas More lived in the days of Elizabeth, we can imagine with what delight he would have listened to the stories of the voyagers about the new lands over the sea, and how his zeal for colonizing would have outrun that of Raleigh himself. In a new land he would have been able to give practical expression to the ideas and theories that he had thought over for so many years. He might have been the founder of a stable, flourishing colony; but then he would probably never have written the *Utopia*, to be the delight and inspiration of the generations which followed him.

The way in which he came to write the book was, as he tells it, thus: "The most victorious and triumphant King of

England, Henry the Eighth of that name, . . . had of late in controversy with Charles, the right high and mighty King of Castile, weighty matters and of great importance. For the debatement and final determination whereof, the King's Majesty sent me ambassador into Flanders. . . . Whiles I was there abiding" (at Antwerp) "did visit me one Peter Giles, a man there in his country of honest reputation. . . . Upon a certain day when I had heard the divine service in our Lady's Church, . . . and was ready to go home to my lodging, I chanced to espy this aforesaid Peter talking with a certain stranger, a man well stricken in age, with a black sunburned face, a long beard, and a cloak cast homely about his shoulders, whom by his favour and apparel, forthwith I judged to be a mariner." This man Peter Giles introduced as Ralph Hythloday, a learned man, who had voyaged in the western seas, and had seen many strange lands. The three adjourned to More's lodging, and there, in the garden "upon a bench covered with green turf" they sat down talking together. The stranger willingly answered the questions of the other two concerning his travels. "But as for monsters," says Sir Thomas More, with an obvious reference to Sir John Mandeville's *Travels*, and similar books, "because they be no news, of them we were nothing inquisitive. For nothing is more easy to be found then be barking Scyllas, ravening Celenos, and Lœstrygonians devourers of people, and such like great and incredible monsters. But to find Citizens ruled by good and wholesome laws, that is an exceeding rare and hard thing." Such a state Hythloday had seen in the island of Utopia.

The description of this island, and of its chief city, Amaurote, shows that More had in his mind all the time he was writing his own well-known and dearly loved London. But when we come to his description of the streets of Utopia, "very commodious and handsome" and twenty feet broad, where stand "fair and gorgeous houses" with large gardens and vineyards, and "all manner of fruit, herbs and flowers," it is clear that he is no longer drawing a picture of the actual London of his time. There were, it is true, a few "fair and

Sir Thomas More 110

After Holbein

Photo. W. A. Mansell & Co.

gorgeous houses" belonging to noblemen, built along the Strand and in the other chief thoroughfares; but for the most part London was made up of "divers small alleys" separated by ditches into which "much filth" was thrown, and "both sides built up with small tenements." In Holland More may have seen the broad streets and well-built houses which he transferred to his Utopia, but not in his own country. In Utopia there are fifty-four "large and fair cities" built after this fashion, each being at least twenty-four miles distant from the next. In the country districts are farms, at each of which forty persons, men and women, with two bondmen, live. "Out of every one of these families or farms cometh every year, into the city twenty persons, which have continued two years before in the country. In their place so many fresh be sent thither out of the city, who, of them that have been there a year already, and be therefore expert and cunning in husbandry, shall be instructed and taught. And they the next year shall teach other." The Utopians are governed by magistrates elected by the people, and these magistrates elect the prince. "The prince's office continueth all his lifetime, unless he be deposed or put down for suspicion of tyranny." The day is so divided that all may have a due share of labour and of rest. "For they dividing the day and the night into twenty-four just hours, appoint and assign only six of these hours to work before noon, upon the which they go straight to dinner; and after dinner when they have rested two hours, then they work three hours and upon that they go to supper. About eight of the clock in the evening, they go to bed: eight hours they give to sleep. All the void time that is between the hours of work, sleep and meat, that they be suffered to bestow, every man as he liketh best himself." "For their garments which throughout all the island be of one fashion (saving that there is a difference between the man's garment and the woman's, between the married and the unmarried) and this one continueth for evermore unchanged, seemly and comely to the eye, no let to the moving and wielding of the body, also fit both for winter and summer: as for these

garments (I say) every family maketh their own." "But now again to the conversation of the citizens among themselves. The eldest ruleth the family. The wives be ministers to their husbands, the children to their parents, and to be short the younger to their elders. Every city is divided into four equal parts, or quarters. In the midst of every quarter there is a market place of all manner of things. Thither the works of every family be brought into certain houses. And every kind of thing is laid up several in barns or store houses. From thence the father of every family fetcheth whatsoever he and his have need of, and carrieth it away with him without money, without exchange, without gage, pawn or pledge. For why should anything be denied unto him? Seeing there is abundance of all things, and that it is not to be feared lest any man will ask more than he needeth." And, to conclude this slight sketch of the Utopians and their ways: "They define virtue to be life ordered according to nature, and that we be hereunto ordained by God."

The manuscript of the *Utopia* was passed about among More's friends, and received great praise. In 1516 it was printed, and thus reached a wider circle, and gained increased popularity. It is said that some readers were so struck by the real and lifelike touches that More gave to his narrative that they could not believe his land of 'Nowhere' to be wholly imaginary, and talked seriously of chartering ships and sending out missionaries to convert the people to their own religious views.

While More was writing his *Utopia* the storm that was to destroy him was gathering. In 1517 came Luther's open defiance of the Pope, and soon the strife between Protestant and Catholic was raging fiercely throughout Northern Europe. In England, it bore down as the lovers of the New Learning had foreseen that it would do, all interest in intellectual pursuits. More quickly became involved in the struggle. He held steadfastly to the religious principles that had guided all his previous life, and in 1535, for his refusal to acknowledge the Act of Supremacy, he suffered death upon the scaffold.

No English version of the *Utopia* was published during More's lifetime. In 1551 appeared " A fruitful and pleasaunte worke of the beste state of a publyke weale, and of the newe yle called Utopia : written in Latine by Syr Thomas More knyght, and translated into Englyshe by Ralphe Robynson Citiyein and Goldsmythe of London, at the procurement, and earnest request of George Tadlowe Citiyein and Haberdassher of the same Citie." This translation, written as it is in the language of More's own day, has held the first place against several others of a later date, and from it the quotations given in this chapter are taken.

CHAPTER XIII

TINDALE'S BIBLE

WHEN Henry VIII came to the throne in 1509 a hundred and twenty-five years had passed since the death of Wiclif, and Lollardry had apparently long ago been crushed. Yet it had never really died out. In each generation it had numbered its scanty band of followers, whose desire for a purer form of religion had been strong enough to make them brave the penalties for heresy which the bishops rigorously enforced. Among this little company was William Tindale, who at the time of which we are speaking, was a student at the University of Oxford. From here, in 1515, he passed to Cambridge, where the memory of the great scholar Erasmus, and of his Greek lectures, was still fresh in all men's minds. Tindale, we know, read and enjoyed Erasmus' books, and doubtless gained from them some of the inspiration which urged him toward his great work. Erasmus, like Sir Thomas More, strongly disapproved of the measures taken by the more violent of the Protestant reformers, who, in a few years were to set Europe in turmoil; but he heartily sympathized with those who were working at the translation of the Scriptures. "I totally dissent," he says, "from those who are unwilling that the sacred Scriptures translated into the vulgar tongue should be read by private individuals. The mysteries of kings it were perhaps better to conceal, but Christ wishes his mysteries to be published as widely as possible. I would wish even all women to read the Gospel and St. Paul's Epistles, and I wish they were translated into all languages of all people, that they might be read and known, not merely by the Scotch and

Irish, but even by the Turks and Saracens. I wish that the husbandman would sing parts of them at his plough, that the weaver may warble them at his shuttle, that the traveller may with their narratives beguile the weariness of the way."

It is impossible not to recognize the influence of these words in Tindale's own memorable utterance concerning his translation of the Bible. "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause the boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than you (a theologian) do." To this purpose he devoted his life, and the great learning and skill in languages which he had industriously acquired. When he left the University he settled down to work in his native county of Gloucestershire, but here he met with many hindrances and much opposition from the unlearned clergy around. He resolved to come to London, and applied to the Bishop of London, whom Erasmus "praiseth exceedingly for his great learning," for a place in his household. But the Bishop, after much delay, answered that "his house was full, he had more than he could well find." "And so," says Tindale, "in London I abode almost one year, . . . and understood at the last not only that there was no room in my Lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England."

In May 1524 Tindale left England, to suffer during long years, "poverty, exile, bitter absence from friends, hunger and thirst and cold, great dangers and innumerable other hard and sharp fightings." He went first to Wittenberg, then the Holy City of the reformers, for there Luther had struck the first blow for Protestant truth. Then he settled at Hamburg, where he proceeded rapidly with his translation. Some help perhaps he gained from the Wicliffite versions, but his main dependence was upon the original Greek text, as edited by Erasmus. Soon the Gospels and Epistles were ready for the printer, and Tindale went on to Cologne, where the printing was begun. Sympathizers gathered round him, followers of Luther, and scholars from Cambridge. A busy little company was engaged in the great work of preparing and printing the

New Testament, as well as various tracts by Wiclif and Luther. Quietly as they proceeded, the attention of neighbouring Catholics was attracted towards them, and one of these obtained an order from the Senate of Cologne, forbidding the printing of heretical works. Tindale and his friends escaped to Worms, taking the precious sheets with them, and again the work went on, until at last, by the end of 1525 the New Testament was finished. Many copies were smuggled over to England, and were spread through the country by the help of the rapidly growing body of Protestants there. In 1526 the King was warned of what was being done, and the strictest precautions were taken against the introduction of any more copies. But in spite of this, the work went on "The Council threatened, the bishops anathematized. They opened subscriptions to buy up the hated and dreaded volumes. They burnt them publicly in St. Paul's. The whip, the gaol, the stake did their worst; and their worst was nothing."

Tindale's courage and resolution remained unshaken. "In burning the New Testament they did none other thing than that I looked for; no more shall they do if they burn me also, if it be God's will it shall be so." Sir Thomas More was one of the foremost in denouncing the work. It was, he said, ignorant, dishonest and heretical—so far did prejudice influence the judgment of a man usually as fair-minded as he was learned, and who admitted that Tindale "before he fell into his Lutheran frenzies was full prettily learned."

By 1530, six editions, making probably fifteen thousand copies, had been distributed. Of the first edition only a fragment of one copy remains, and that was discovered accidentally in 1836, when a London bookseller found the first twenty chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel bound up with a tract. Of the second edition we have one copy; of the others two or three.

In 1527 Tindale retired to Marburg, and entered with fervour into the religious controversies of the day. But this did not hinder him from proceeding with his great work. In 1530 his translation of the Pentateuch, from the original

Hebrew, was printed at Marburg. The only perfect copy of this edition is in the British Museum. In 1531 Tindale was at Antwerp, and here he translated Joshua, Kings, and Chronicles. During these years his life was in constant danger. The English king had demanded his surrender, and he had many bitter private enemies who were waiting for an opportunity to betray him. The sword hung above his head, and in calmness he waited for it to fall. Each day brought the stroke nearer, and each day found him serenely at work, with such complete detachment from personal fears as witnessed to his large and lofty courage.

In 1535 the sword fell. Tindale was living at the house of an English merchant in Antwerp, and while there he was comparatively safe. But one of those who had long been plotting his destruction—a fanatical Papist, to whom his works were as the works of Antichrist—managed to decoy him outside the boundaries of the town, and deliver him into the hands of the Emperor's agents. He was imprisoned in the castle of Velvorde. His friends did everything that could be done to help him, but without avail. He was charged with heresy, tried, condemned, and sentenced to death. On October 6 the sentence was carried out. Tindale was strangled, and his body burnt at the stake. The life that had been so wholly devoted to the service of God and man was at an end.

Before Tindale's death things had changed in England. The Reformation had become an accomplished fact, and in 1533 a decree was issued that the Bible should be published in the native tongue. Miles Coverdale, a friend of Cranmer's, was employed to collect and revise the translations of Tindale, and the Bible which he edited appeared in 1535, "Set forth with the Kynge's most gracious license."

So Tindale's life-work was accomplished, and the Bible which was the gift he gave to his countrymen, and paid for with his own life, was brought, as he had dreamed that it should be, within the reach of the humblest Englishman. The tremendous influence which his translation has had upon the country is seen both in the history of the nation and the history

of its literature. Early in the seventeenth century came the revision which gave us our Authorized Version. But this is substantially the version of Tindale, with a few modifications and corrections, such as he himself had foreseen might be necessary. "The peculiar genius, if such a word may be permitted," says Mr. Froude, "that breathes through it [the Authorized Version]—the mingled tenderness and majesty—the Saxon simplicity—the preternatural grandeur—unequalled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tindale."

It is not necessary to give here any extracts from Tindale's translation. Its words are familiar to every one throughout the land. The man who in his humility described himself as "evil-favoured in this world, and without grace in the sight of men, speechless and rude, dull and slow-witted," has been during three hundred and fifty years honoured by his countrymen for his part in giving them the Book which is at once the purest version of the truths of their religion and their greatest English classic.

CHAPTER XIV

EUPHUES: THE ANATOMIE OF WIT

IT is, in spite of occasional tediousness and pedantry, as brave, righteous, and pious a book as a man need look into; and I wish for no better proof of the nobleness and virtue of the Elizabethan age than the fact that *Euphues* and the *Arcadia* were the two popular romances of the day. . . . Let those who have not read *Euphues* believe that if they could train a son after the pattern of his Ephœbus to the great saving of their own money and his virtue, all fathers, even in these money-making days, would rise up and call them blessed."

These are the words of Charles Kingsley concerning John Lyly's book *Euphues*, and it is well to remember them, because as a rule, the subject-matter of the book is disregarded, and attention given only to the curious style in which it is written. The style, indeed, constitutes the book's chief claim to be considered as one of the memorable works of the Elizabethan era; but the matter also is, as Kingsley says, worthy of attention.

The author of *Euphues* came to the court of Elizabeth from the University of Oxford in 1575, when he was about twenty-two years old. His ancestry was not undistinguished. He was born, he tells us, in " the wyld of Kent, of honest parents." His grandfather was William Lyly, the grammarian, the friend of More, and of Colet, the first headmaster of St. Paul's School. Little of this great man's love of learning seems to have passed to his grandson. John Lyly left the University with no great reputation as a scholar; he was, his biographer tells us, " always averse to the crabbed studies of logic and philosophie.

. . . His genie being naturally bent on the pleasant paths of poetry, he did, in a manner, neglect academical studies." Some of his critics would have us believe that he did far worse than merely neglect his studies. "He spent his time," says Gabriel Harvey, the friend of Spenser, "gaming, fooling and knaving," and was "himself a mad lad as ever twang'd, never troubled with any substance of wit or circumstance of honestie." But Gabriel Harvey was a strict and hostile critic, who had no sympathy with the high spirits and superabundant life so characteristic of the younger writers of his day. It seems probable that Lyly's sins, thus sternly denounced, were only the excesses of a youth intoxicated, as nearly all the Elizabethan youths were intoxicated, with the sense of freedom and opportunity which came with that glorious and adventurous age. Lyly gained among the brilliant group of students beginning to gather at both Universities (most of whom shared his aversion to "logic and philosophie") a great reputation as a wit, and this reputation seems to have been his great asset when he came to London to seek his fortune.

The easiest road to fortune in those days was the patronage of some great man. Lyly applied to Lord Burleigh, and was given a post, the nature of which is not certain. But it served to admit him to the Court of Elizabeth, to which all who desired either to push their fortunes or to enjoy the pleasures of intellectual intercourse must come. The Court was the centre of influence, and the centre of taste. "It was not only a royal court; it was also a great club."

Among all the proud, high-born nobles who flocked to this splendid centre of a great kingdom, the young, unnoted Oxford scholar daily moved. Sidney was there, just returned from his Continental tour, the darling of the whole Court, the brightest jewel in Elizabeth's crown. His sister, Mary Sidney, herself a poet and a friend of poets, was there, too, and the great Earl of Pembroke, her affianced husband. Walter Raleigh, the young, unknown Devonshire squire, had lately by means of readiness, gallantry and a handsome face, gained for himself a place in Elizabeth's favour, which made him a dangerous rival

of the brilliant Essex, and even of the magnificent Leicester. Great statesmen like Cecil, Walsingham and Sir Nicholas Bacon, looked gravely on at the pageants and shows with which the great queen loved to be entertained; and their wives and daughters, forsaking spacious and beautiful country houses, hurried up to town, to cramp themselves and their belongings into the one small chamber which the parsimony of Elizabeth allotted as adequate private accommodation for a great lady. Probably few of these splendid and stately personages at first noticed "the witty, comical, facetiously quick and unparalleled John Lyly," whom it is thought that Ben Jonson had in his mind when he drew the character of Fastidious Brisk, in *Every Man Out of his Humour*. "A neat, spruce, affecting courtier, one that wears clothes well and in fashion; practised by his glass how to salute; speaks good remnants notwithstanding the base viol and tobacco; swears tersely and with variety; cares not what lady's favour he belies, or great man's familiarity; a good property to perfume the boot of a coach." The picture is doubtless exaggerated but it probably gives a very fair idea of the man whom we imagine to have been as neat, precise, and dainty in his person as he was in his works. Nothing in the Court life around him escaped his shrewd observation. He noted the affectations of the great lords and ladies, and their half-unconscious efforts to attain to a distinctive, courtly mode of speech. He saw how eagerly the stay-at-homes tried to imitate the Italian mannerisms brought back and proudly displayed by those who had been so fortunate as to visit the country which was at that time the object of the highest admiration to one class of Englishmen, and of the deepest abhorrence to another. Lyly saw his opportunity, and he set to work upon the book which was to have so memorable an influence on the manners and the literature of the Elizabethan age, and was to add a new word to the English language. "Fitting his work with delicate intuition to a wavering irresolute tendency, uncertain as yet of its object, he left that tendency by reaction a self-conscious fashion."

Euphues appeared in 1579. It claims to be a story telling of the adventures of a young man making the fashionable tour of Europe; but the story is of the slightest. At every possible opportunity the writer digresses into moralizings upon subjects such as friendship, love, constancy and, above all, education. Euphues is, Lyly tells us, a youth "of more wit than wealth, and yet of more wealth than wisdom." He sets out for Italy with his friend Philautus, and they arrive at Naples, "a place of more pleasure than profit, and yet of more profit than pietie." Here they meet with a lady, Lucilla, and become rivals for her love. Philautus is first favoured, then Euphues, but finally the lady rejects both in favour of a worthless fellow, Curio. The two, reconciled by their common misfortune, first mourn together, then seek comfort in various moral reflections. "Come therefore to me," says Euphues, "al ye lovers that have bene deceived by fancy, the glasse of pestilence, or deluded by woemen, the gate to perdition, be as earnest to seeke a medicine, as you were eager to runne into a mischiefe, the earth bringeth forth as well Endive to delight the people, as Hemlocke to endaunger the patient, as wel the Rose to distil, as the Nettle to sting, as well the Bee to give Hunny as the Spyder to yield poyson."

The rest of the book is taken up with an Epistle, *Euphues and his Ephœbus*, and other letters of Euphues addressed to various friends, in which a complete theory of education is given. The tone of these epistles justifies Kingsley's praise. "The Rose that is eaten with the Canker is not gathered because it groweth on that stalke that the sweet doth, neither was Helen made a Starre bicause she came of that Egge with Castor, nor thou a gentleman in that thy auncestores were of nobilitie. It is not ye descent of birth but ye consent of conditions that maketh Gentlemen, neither great manors but good manners that expresse the true Image of dignitie. There is copper coin of the stamp that gold is, yet it is not currant, there commeth poyson of the fish as well as good oyle, yet is it not wholsome, and of man may proceede an evill Childe and yet no Gentleman. For as the Wine that runneth on the lees,

is not therefore to be accompted neat bicause it was drawn of the same peece. Or as the water that springeth from the fountaines head and floweth into the filthy channel is not to be called cleere bicause it came of the same streame; so neither is he that descendeth of noble parentage, if he desist from noble deeds to be esteemed a Gentleman."

In 1580 a second part of the work appeared under the title of *Euphues and his England.* This tells how Euphues and Philautus set out on a visit to England, land at Dover, and proceed to Canterbury, where they meet Fidus, an old bee-keeper, who tells them a very long and somewhat tedious story of his own life. After this they go on to London and visit the Court, which far surpasses all their expectations. "I was driven into a maze," says Euphues, "to behold the lusty and brave gallants, the beautiful and chaste ladies, the rare and goodly orders." Philautus falls in love with one of these ladies, but is again unfortunate in his suit. Euphues writes several letters to his friend full of praises of the Court, and especially of Lord Burleigh and Queen Elizabeth.

From the few extracts that have been given the reader will have little difficulty in recognizing the main qualities of the style of *Euphues.* These may be briefly summed up as follows: (1) Alliteration; (2) Balanced, antithetical sentences; (3) Metaphors of a curious, far-fetched character, piled one upon another; (4) Illustrations from an "unnatural natural history." This last quality may be further illustrated by the following extracts. "The filthy Sow when she is sick eateth the Sea Crab, and is immediately recured." "Is not poyson taken out of the Hunnysuckle by the Spider?" "The Estrich that taketh the greatest pride in her feathers picketh some of the worst out, and burneth them."

Euphues received at Court a universal and immediate welcome. From one of the most insignificant members of society Lyly became at once almost the best known and most eagerly sought after. Great ladies petitioned him to teach them the incomparable graces of his style, and deferred to his opinion in all questions of elegance of diction. "Our nation

is in his debt," wrote Edward Blount, a bookseller of the time of Charles I, "for a new English which he taught them. *Euphues and his England* began first that language. All our Ladies were then his Schollers. And that Beautie in Court which could not Parley Euphuisme, was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French." It is to ladies that the book is specially addressed. "Euphues had rather lye shut in a Ladye's casket," wrote Lyly, "than open in a Scholler's Studie." As has been said, his wishes in this respect were fully accomplished. Ben Jonson throughout his *Every Man Out of His Humour*, makes fun of Lyly's popularity with the ladies of the Court. "O sweet Fastidious Brisk! O fine courtier!" he makes one of them exclaim at intervals; and Fastidious Brisk apologises for being late for an appointment by pleading the demands the ladies make upon his time. "Good faith, I must crave pardon, I was invited this morning ere I was out of my bed, by a bevy of ladies, to a banquet, whence it was almost one of Hercules's labours for me to come away, but that the respect of my promise did so prevail with me. I know they'll take it very ill."

Lyly's influence on the writers of his day was scarcely less marked than his influence on the Court. Robert Greene (*see* p. 139), whom Gabriel Harvey called "the ape of Euphues," has some passages which might have come straight from Lyly's book itself. "The Turtle pearketh not on barren trees," he wrote in his novel *Menaphon*, "Doves delight not in foule cottages, the Lyon frequents not putrified haunts. . . . He that grafteth Jilliflowers upon the Nettle marreth the smell; who coveteth to tie the Lambe and the Lion in one tedder maketh a brawle." Peele and Nash and the other University wits also show marks of the same influence.

When *Euphues* first appeared, Shakespeare, a lad of fifteen, was still at Stratford-on-Avon. But he came up to London before the rage for the book had subsided, and the influence of Lyly can be traced in all his early works. The pedantical school master, Holofernes, and the solemn curate, Sir Nathaniel, in *Love's Labour's Lost* are both Euphuists; and Beatrice

and Benedict in *Much Ado About Nothing*, might well be a lady and gentleman of Queen Elizabeth's Court, highly proficient in the fashionable speech of their day.

There was, in fact, scarcely any work published during the ten years which followed the appearance of *Euphues* that did not show some signs of being affected by the fashion set in this book; and for another ten years its influence, though not so strong, was still felt. Then it died out completely. "When literary popularity is based on faults accepted by the bad taste of an epoch for transcendent merits," says J. A. Symonds, "it is foredoomed to a decline as rapid as its uprise, and to reaction as powerful as the force which promoted it. *Euphues* entranced society in the sixteenth century because our literature, in common with that of Italy and Spain and France, was passing through a phase of affectation for which Euphuism was the natural expression. It corresponded to something in the manners and modes of thinking which prevailed in Europe at that period. It was the English type of an all but universal disease. There would have been Euphuism in some form or other without *Euphues*."

Later writers who have attempted to imitate this style have met with little success. Scott's Sir Piercie Shafton in *The Monastery* is intended as a picture of the fashionable gallant of Elizabeth's day, given over entirely to Euphuism, but he only succeeds in being a caricature.

The immense popularity of *Euphues*, though it brought Lyly much fame, does not appear to have brought him much money. We know very little of his after life, but we know that he was often in great straits through poverty. He married, and children were born to him, but who his wife was, and whether his home life was happy or miserable we cannot tell.

About 1581 Lyly turned to a new literary enterprise, which was probably suggested to him by the Earl of Oxford, in whose service he then was. The taste for dramatic representations had been steadily growing in England, and at this time there were in existence several companies of actors, each under the patronage of some great person. These companies acted the

masques, interludes, and other dramatic productions then available. Some of them consisted of the boys who formed the choir of a church, and one of the most noted was the Company of Child Players of the Chapel Royal. Lyly's new project was the writing of plays for this company, and it was highly successful. The dainty, tuneful lyrics which are to be found in these plays give him as great a claim to the remembrance of succeeding ages as does his once famous *Euphues*.

For thirteen years Lyly was the Court playwright. His ambition was to attain the post of Master of the Revels, but although from time to time hopes were held out to him, nothing substantial followed. He seems to have kept at least a portion of his high spirits through all his trials, and a certain quality of humour which enabled him to see the laughable side even of his disappointments. Two petitions which he addressed to the queen have survived, and in the second of these, dated 1601, he prays that since he seems born to have nothing, he may have a protection to pay nothing, "which suite is like his, that having followed the Court ten years, for recompence of his servis committed a Robberie and took it out in a pardon." When his petitions failed to bring any improvement in his circumstances, he sought consolation in the means that were at hand. From his youth, he had been "a hungry reader of good books" and now he read more than ever; and he had been among the first to use the newly introduced tobacco. So that we may think of him, as the years went by and the brilliant Court lost its attractions, comforting himself in a fashion very familiar to our own day, with a pipe, and a favourite book, perhaps, too, with some of the philosophic reflections he had put forward so sagely in his *Euphues*. He died in November 1606 being then fifty-two years of age.

CHAPTER XV

THE SONNETS OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

ABOUT three years after the publication of Lyly's *Euphues*, while its phrases were still constantly in the mouths of ladies and gentlemen of fashion, a new topic of literary interest began to occupy the attention of the Court. A series of sonnets was being handed about in certain circles, and each fresh one as it appeared was bringing interest and excitement to a higher point. Not that the bare fact of a courtier having written verses had in it anything remarkable. Every Elizabethan gentleman could do as much; verse-writing was almost as necessary and as ordinary an accomplishment as dancing. But these sonnets were pronounced by all who read them to be of exceptional and wonderful beauty; and their author was Sir Philip Sidney.

No other name could have been so potent, for Sidney was the darling of the Court. He was the son of Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy of Ireland, and the nephew of Elizabeth's brilliant favourite, the Earl of Leicester. He was the friend of the new poet, Edmund Spenser, whose praise was at that moment in everybody's mouth; it was at Sidney's beautiful home of Penshurst that Spenser's *Shepheard's Calendar* had been written. But it was not only through his connexions and friends that Philip Sidney was famous. Though he was only twenty-six years old he had made a notable place for himself even among the crowd of brilliant men and women that Elizabeth had gathered round her. Others might have done greater deeds, or shown greater genius, but none was loved like Philip Sidney. Men loved him for his noble, generous nature, for his courage, for his knightly skill

and grave courtesy, for his gallant bearing and his handsome face. Every one who came near him felt the singular charm of a character, which, even across the three centuries that separate his age from our own, has power to capture our imaginations and stir our hearts. The Queen herself loved this "brightest jewel of her crown," though, a little before the time of which we have been speaking, her wrath had been hot against him for the plain words he, a stripling, had ventured to address to her on the subject of her proposed marriage with the Duke of Anjou. Sidney had, in fact, but just returned from a year's retirement from the Court, made necessary by the Queen's displeasure. He had spent the year very happily at Wilton, the home of his sister, Mary, Countess of Pembroke, and there he had written for her his famous romance of *Arcadia*. Now the Queen's anger had abated, and he had returned, with the glory of a sturdy and proved patriotism added to all his other graces.

Further than this, the interest of the Court had been aroused by a love story of which Sidney was the hero, and which was, at that very time, the subject of general conversation. It was comparatively an old story, for it had begun five years before. Philip, then a youth of twenty-one, had just returned from the Continental tour, which was intended to put the final touch to an education carried on at Shrewsbury School and the University of Oxford. He had arrived home in time to join the train of nobles who followed Elizabeth in the famous progress through England which culminated in the historic revels at Kenilworth. One of the places visited was Chartley, the seat of the old Earl of Essex, who was already well known to Sidney. Penelope, daughter of the Earl of Essex, was at this time about thirteen years old, and it occurred to the Earl that the young man whose rare qualities he had already recognized, would be an altogether desirable bridegroom for his daughter. Some arrangement seems to have been made between the two families, though there was no formal betrothal, and friends on both sides spoke of the marriage as a settled thing. There were ladies at the Court who had heard it so

Sir Philip Sidney 128

From a curious Print after Isaac Oliver

Photo. W. A. Mansell & Co.

referred to by Sidney's mother and by his sisters. In the next year the Earl of Essex died, leaving a message for Sidney. "Tell him I sent him nothing, but I wish him well; so well that if God do move their hearts I wish that he might match with my daughter. I call him son; he is so wise, virtuous and godly. If he go on in the course he hath begun, he will be as famous and worthy a gentleman as England ever bred." Still, for some years, nothing further is heard, and we do not know what were the thoughts and wishes of either Penelope or Philip. Circumstances which have not come to light may have made it impossible for the young man to begin his wooing; perhaps there was a delay owing to money difficulties, for the Sidneys were poor. But we cannot quite think that if Philip had been really ardent in his love for Penelope he would have failed to make, during these five years, some determined effort to win her. He does not seem to have done so; and the explanation probably is that he was wholly taken up with the ambitious dreams of youth, with the great schemes and the glorious future of which he and his little group of friends—Fulke Greville, Edward Dyer and Edmund Spenser—talked together with such high-hearted hopefulness. In this state of comfortable indifference, or assurance, he seems to have remained until he returned to Court after his year's stay at Wilton, and was met with the news that Penelope Devereux had lately married Lord Rich—a nobleman, wealthy, but much older than herself.

It was of this story that the lords and the ladies of Elizabeth's Court were talking when Sidney's sonnets, signed 'Astrophel' and addressed to 'Stella,' began to be handed about among the privileged friends of the writer. Gradually the circle of readers was extended, and every gentleman who wished to be considered in the front rank of fashion made haste to address to his lady a poem modelled upon these greatly lauded productions. The sonnet had been introduced from Italy long before, in the days of Wyatt and Surrey (*see* p. 100); but it had not found much favour. Now its vogue was established. During the next twenty years there

was scarcely a poet of any note—not excepting Shakespeare himself—who did not produce a sonnet series, and many versifiers of no note at all also attempted the fashionable exercise.

Some of the popularity of Sidney's sonnets was undoubtedly due to the fame of the writer, but much was a genuine tribute to their merit. We cannot deny to the Elizabethans a measure of literary taste large enough to enable them to recognize how superior these sonnets were to all but the very highest examples of the mass of verse which the age was producing. The judgment of modern criticism has fully confirmed the contemporary verdict.

We do not know in what order the sonnets were written, or over what period the writing of the series extended, though something can be gathered by carefully following out the line of thought that runs through them. Critics believe that they were completed within a year, and are inclined to place first in order a group of sonnets in which the writer treats, with much fervour, of Stella's perfections, her husband's unworthiness, and his own passion. He tells how, to ease his pain, he was impelled to write the sonnets yet could find no fitting words, until—

> "Fool!" said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart and write."

And out of his heart, as it must still seem to the reader, though modern criticism has much to say about the common literary conventions of the time, and about wholesale borrowings from French and Latin, Sidney wrote. It is true, he says, that beauty is but external, and passing, that men make for themselves gods unworthy of their worship,—

> True, and yet true that I must Stella love.

Reason shows how much loss such an attachment must bring him—

> I see, and yet no greater sorrow take
> Than that I lose no more for Stella's sake.

Men see his pensiveness, and guess that some great enterprise is occupying his mind,—

> Alas, the race
> Of all my thoughts hath neither stop nor start
> But only Stella's eyes and Stella's heart.

The heavens interest him no more, only "those two stars in Stella's face." Politics, once so dear, have now no existence for him; when

> Questions busy wits to me do frame,
> I, cumbered with good manners, answer do,
> But know not how; for still I think of you.

Then, after the beautiful sonnet addressed to the moon ("With how sad steps, O Moon,"), come lamentations for his early insensibility:

> I might! unhappy word—Oh me, I might,
> And then would not, or could not see my bliss,
> Till now wrapt in a most infernal night,
> I find how heavenly day, wretch! I did miss.

He calls on sleep to free him for a time from his pains:

> Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
> The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe.

He prays that if he is to continue to suffer such pangs, they may be allowed to kill him at once:

> A kind of grace it is to slay with speed.

Then follows a group of sonnets in which it appears that, in answer to his continued pleadings, Stella has shown him some signs of favour, and has acknowledged that her love is given to him, as his to her.

> Gone is the winter of my misery!
> My spring appears: O see what here doth grow,
> For Stella hath, with words where faith doth shine,
> Of her high heart given me the monarchy.

But this does not last long. Stella repents of her lapse from the duty she owes to her husband,—

> When I was forced from Stella ever dear—
> Stella, food of my thoughts, heart of my heart—
> Stella, whose eyes make all my tempests clear—
> By Stella's laws of duty to depart;

For a time he rails against the fate that has separated them, then sadly submits:

> Stella, since thou so right a princess art
> Of all the powers which life bestows on me,
> That ere by them ought undertaken be,
> They first resort unto that sovereign part;

Sweet, for a while give respite to my heart,
Which pants as though it still should leap to thee :
And on my thoughts give thy lieutenancy
To this great cause which needs both use and art.
And as a queen, who from her presence sends
Whom she employs, dismiss from thee my wit,
Till it have wrought what thy own will attends.
On servants' shame oft masters' blame doth sit :
O let not fools in me thy works reprove,
And scorning say, " See what it is to love ! "

What the ' great cause ' was we do not know ; perhaps some scheme for the colonization of the western lands, such as, we know, occupied his thoughts at this time. If so, it is probable that the Queen, as she had done before, refused to allow him to leave her kingdom on such an enterprise. But he found other ' great causes ' in which to spend himself ; and, on the field of Zutphen, in 1586, he received his death-wound. On the same field he gained for himself undying glory, not by any fierce onslaught or deed of valour, but by a quiet, simple, yet stupendous act of unselfishness, of which all the world has heard. He was carried to Arnheim, and there, twenty-five days later, he died, after enduring great suffering with a brave patience that witnessed " that those sweet and large affections in him could no more be contracted with the narrowness of pain, grief or sickness than any sparkle of our immortality can be privately buried in the shadow of death."

CHAPTER XVI

DR. FAUSTUS: FRIAR BACON AND FRIAR BUNGAY

THROUGHOUT the Middle Ages there had been current all over Europe a legend of a man who had sold his soul to the devil in return for certain privileges; and students of the period have seen in this legend the unconscious expression of mediæval man's strongly felt, yet hardly realized needs. Like the hero of the legend he rebelled instinctively against the cramping conditions which the age imposed upon him. He longed for a larger, fuller and richer life, for wider experiences and more ample opportunities. He wanted to be lifted out of the narrow present by magic whispers from the past, and glorious visions of the future. Like the hero of the legend, also, he was reckless as to the price he paid if he only could compass his wish; let him but get the cup in his hands he would drain it to the last drop before he thought of the reckoning.

The growth of this feeling among the more ardent and impassioned natures was one of the many factors which, working together, brought about the Renaissance. As the time drew near when Europe should be delivered from the straitness of mediæval bonds, the old legend took definite form and finally attached itself to the person of a certain Dr. Faustus, who lived in Thuringia during the early part of the sixteenth century. Its details were decided by the new spirit which was then so powerfully moving the whole of Europe. Faustus was said to have sold his soul to the devil in return for twenty-four years of life, during which all knowledge and all pleasure should lie open before him, all the riches of the world should be within

his grasp, and an attendant fiend should be allotted to him to do his will. Rude versions of the story were written down, and one of these was published at Frankfort in 1587. At that period the literary influence of the Continent was strongly felt in England, and a crowd of translators were busy turning into English any work, either classical or modern, which they thought would be acceptable to the public; it was not long, therefore, before an English version of the *Faustbuch* was to be bought at the bookstalls in St. Paul's Churchyard. The story soon became popular in England. Its wild daring fell in with the temper of the nation, fresh from a victory over Spain, and full of the hot spirit of adventure; its supernatural element suited the taste of a public which still devoutly believed in the black art, and punished with the greatest barbarity old women accused of witchcraft.

Among its readers the *Faustbuch* seems to have numbered some members of a remarkable group of writers who were at this time settled in London. This group furnishes striking examples of the class of men typified in the Faust legend—men in whom the spirit of the Renaissance burnt fiercely and without restraint. Its most prominent members were George Peele, Robert Greene, Thomas Nash, Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Kyd. All of them had been educated at one or other of the Universities, and they are sometimes known as the 'University Wits.' One by one they had drifted up to London. They had no settled occupation or means of livelihood, but they were willing to sacrifice all hope of position and advancement, all the comforts and even the necessities of existence to the passion by which they were consumed—the burning desire to taste all that life could offer, to know, to feel, to enter into full possession of the golden world which seemed in those wonderful days to be opening before them.

Their poverty drove them to the poorer quarters of London, and they had their homes in foul streets, amid squalor and wretchedness. But nothing daunted the wild spirit of adventure within them. They revelled and rioted and feasted while any money remained, and when there was none they starved until

their ready pens had managed to produce something saleable —a pamphlet, a story, a poem, a ballad to be sung in the streets, a set of doggerel verses upholding one or other side in the many controversies of the day. Soon they turned eagerly to the theatre as offering a more fruitful source of income. The drama was rapidly growing in popularity. Dramatic shows of various kinds had long been common at the Court and at the houses of the great nobles. Now they began to spread among the people. Rough dramas, acted first in inn-yards, drove the old miracle and morality plays quite out of the field. The strong, virile taste of the Elizabethans found these older works tasteless and insipid. It required something nearer to real life, and thus the regular drama grew up to satisfy a public demand. At the time when the University wits were leading their struggling, hand to hand life in London, its vogue had so greatly increased that at least two theatres had been built for the representation of plays, and these were flourishing greatly. Players could earn large incomes, fare sumptuously, and go in silks and satins, while poor authors starved in garrets. No wonder the eyes of the University wits turned longingly in the direction of the theatre. Some of them became actors, others wrote new plays or touched up old ones—did, in fact, any kind of odd literary work that was required, by means of which they could fill their empty purses. Thus came into existence a body of dramatic literature, which, although only in a few cases of real, lasting merit, was valuable in helping forward the great dramatic development which was to culminate in the work of Shakespeare.

Among this wild and riotous band, the most daring, the most reckless, and the greatest was Christopher Marlowe. He alone of them all can be called a great genius. The others were capable of moments of inspiration in which they produced work of rare quality. But wild Kit Marlowe rose high above them all. When he was only twenty-four years old, he produced his play of *Tamburlaine the Great*, which raised a storm among the critics of the day. It was, they declared, a violation of all known rules, a piece of 'swelling bombast,' a ranting, raging,

extravagant turbulent riot of noise and horror. Yet the public of the day came in crowds to see *Tamburlaine* acted; and critics of later times have recognized that in this play, crude and violent as it is, the great Elizabethan drama began.

In 1588 Marlowe turned to the story of Dr. Faustus, the subject of which was so congenial to his restless, insatiable spirit of curiosity. In his hands Faustus becomes, not an ordinary vulgar magician, but a learned doctor whose desire for knowledge and for power has in it some of the noble elements that inspire the true scholar. The veritable Renaissance hunger and thirst is upon him. He is learned in the lore of the Schoolmen, and has found it barren and unprofitable, leading to no full and large life such as he longs to lead. Magic alone seems to promise him his heart's desire.

> O what a world of profit and delight,
> Of power, of honour, of omnipotence
> Is promised to the studious artizan!
> All things that move between the quiet poles
> Shall be at my command. . . .
> A sound magician is a mighty god.

The thought of the power that is to be his intoxicates him, and he bursts into rapturous anticipations of the use he will make of it:

> Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
> Resolve me of all ambiguities,
> Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
> I'll have them fly to India for gold,
> Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
> And search all corners of the new-found world
> For pleasant fruits and princely delicates;
> I'll have them read me strange philosophy
> And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;

Much of this sounds like a magniloquent description of what men actually did in the great Elizabethan age, when new worlds, both actual and intellectual, were discovered by daring adventurers.

The compact with the Evil One is signed, and Faustus enters upon the joys he has dreamed of. He travels to and fro all over the world, he works miracles to his heart's desire. The

forces of nature obey him, he has riches at command, and his attendant fiend, Mephistophilis, is obedient to his will. Much of what he does seems, to modern readers, puerile and unworthy of the great scheme of the play. But it must be remembered that Marlowe had to please an Elizabethan audience, and that the Elizabethans had a childlike taste for marvels and a keen enjoyment of what we should now consider silly practical jokes or rough horse-play. Even Shakespeare found that some concessions had to be made to the 'groundlings' who were powerful to make or to mar a new production; and in his royal and splendid fashion he gave them the childish playthings they asked for, wrought of fine gold and precious stones; and so we get his matchless series of fools. Marlowe could not do this; he could give only the ordinary glass and tinsel, and he flung these down scornfully, with no attempt to disguise his contempt of "such conceits as Clownage keeps in pay."

The clowning element, however, forms after all but a small part in the adventures of Dr. Faustus. He makes the treasures of the classic past his own:

> Have I not made blind Homer sing to me
> Of Alexander's love and Œnon's death?
> And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes,
> With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
> Made music with my Mephistophilis?

He calls up the bodily presence of Helen of Troy, and his address to her is one of the finest poetical passages in the whole play:

> Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships
> And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
> Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

Here, again, the legend is made a kind of allegory, shadowing man's recovery of the old classic works of Greece and Rome. "All through the Middle Ages, uneasy, imperfect memories of Greece and Rome had haunted Europe. . . . That for which Faustus sold his soul . . . was yielded to the world, without price, at the Renaissance."

The twenty-four years is nearly over, and Faustus must pay the price. He returns to Wittenberg and there awaits the

coming of the fiends who are to carry off his soul to hell. The agony of this last scene is almost intolerable :

O Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually !
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come ;
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day ; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul ! . . . .
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.
O, I'll leap up to God ! Who pulls me down ?
See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament !
One drop of blood would save my soul, half a drop ; ah, my Christ,
Rend not my heart for naming of my Christ !
Yet will I call on him : O, spare me, Lucifer !

So Marlowe brings his tragic story to its close. It is no wonder that when *Dr. Faustus* was acted before an Elizabethan audience its effect was stupendous. The celebrated tragic actor, Edward Alleyn, took the part of Faustus. Men trembled, we are told, as if the fiends on the stage had really come from the lower world. Fifty years later Prynne tells of a tradition current in his day, that the visible apparition of the Devil appeared "on the stage at the Belsavage Playhouse (to the great amazement both of the actors and the spectators) whilst they were prophanely playing the History of Faustus, the truth of which I have heard from many now alive, who well remember it, there being some distracted with that fearful sight."

The rest of the story of Marlowe's short life and tragical death is soon told. He wrote other plays—*Edward II, The Jew of Malta, Dido of Carthage.* The first of these has been judged by some critics to rival Shakespeare's *Richard III* ; the other two are of inferior merit. In May 1593 a warrant was issued by the Star Chamber summoning him to appear before their Lordships to answer to some charge, the nature of which was not specified. He appears to have been examined and released, and to have left London immediately for Deptford. Drake's famous vessel, *The Golden Hind,*

Illustration to Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus" 138

From an ancient engraving

was at this time lying at Deptford, and was daily visited by crowds of eager sight-seers. Marlow went among the rest, and on board this ship he met his death. According to tradition he was stabbed in a brawl with one of his companions. He was buried in the parish church, and the record in the register runs, "Christopher Marlowe, slain by Francis Archer."

About six months after *Dr. Faustus* was put upon the stage, another play dealing with the same subject was produced by Robert Greene. Greene also belonged to the company of the University wits, and his life was wild and dissolute. Shortly before his death he wrote a kind of confession which he called, *A Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance.* In this he told of the life he had led since he left the University and came to London. "I became," he says, "an author of plays, and a penner of love pamphlets, so that I soon grew famous in that qualitie, that who for that trade grown so ordinary about London as Robin Greene? Yong yet in years, though olde in wickednesse, I began to resolve that there was nothing bad that was profitable, whereupon I grew so rooted in all mischiefe that I had as great delight in wickednesse as sundry hath in godlinesse and as much felicitie I took in villainy as others had in honestie." He tired out the patience of his friends and reduced himself to the extremest poverty, so that he was compelled to write stories, plays, poems as quickly as possible, and sell them for any wretched sum the publishers and managers would offer him. "For these my vaine discourses," he goes on, "I was beloved of the more vainer sort of people, who, being my continual companions, came still to my lodging, and there would continue quaffing, corousing and surfeting with me all the day long." We cannot help thinking that there is some exaggeration in this picture. Greene's plays are pure in tone, and the lyrics scattered through them are of fresh and wonderful beauty; his women characters have a delicacy and a charm which lift them high above the creations of every other dramatist of the day, with the single exception of Shakespeare. It is hard to

believe that the man who created the fair rustic maid, Margaret of Fressingfield, was the tall ragged fellow, with rough head of hair and long red beard who swaggered and bullied and brawled through the streets of London, so that peaceable citizens dreaded the name of Robin Greene. Yet so his own account and the accounts of his contemporaries show him to us; and we marvel the more at the work which he produced.

Greene chose as the foundation of his play an English prose tract which connected the old legend with Roger Bacon, the learned Schoolman of the thirteenth century. He dealt with it in a lighter vein than that of Marlowe in *Dr. Faustus*, and he introduced a love story which divided attention with the main theme of the play. Briefly told, the story is as follows: Edward, Prince of Wales, son of Henry III, comes with his companions, Lord Lacy and others, into Suffolk. There he sees Margaret, daughter of the keeper of Fressingfield, where "among the cream bowls she did shine," and at once falls in love with her. "A bonnier wench," he says, "all Suffolk cannot yield. All Suffolk! nay, all England holds not such." It is suggested to him that he shall attempt to win Margaret's love by the aid of Friar Bacon, the wizard who lives at Oxford, and he goes off to find him, commissioning Lacy to meet Margaret at Fressingfield Fair and woo her for his prince. Lacy, however, falls in love with Margaret on his own account, and she with him, and after some attempt to keep faith with the prince, he asks her to marry him. She consents, and Friar Bungay, who is also a magician, though inferior in power to Friar Bacon, promises to aid them. This scene Bacon, by his magic power enables the prince to witness in his crystal glass; the prince is infuriated, and Bacon causes a devil to enter and carry off Bungay on his back. Many other marvels are performed, and then we come to the account of Bacon's great and crowning work. He and Friar Bungay have made a great brazen head, formed within and without, like the head of a man, and by the power of the evil spirits that they have called up they have learnt how it may be made to speak.

Certain substances must be burnt before it, and incantations said; then in about a month's time—the spirits cannot give the exact date—it will speak. Bacon and Bungay design to learn from it how they can build round England a wall of brass—a wall so strong

> That if ten Cæsars liv'd and reign'd in Rome,
> With all the legions Europe doth contain,
> They should not touch a grass of English ground.

The fateful time when the figure shall speak has almost come, and Bacon addresses his servant, Miles:

> Thou know'st that I have dived into hell
> And sought the darkest palaces of fiends;
> That with my magic spells great Belcephon
> Hath left his lodge and kneelèd at my cell;
> The rafters of the earth rent from the poles
> And three-form'd Luna hid her silver looks,
> Trembling upon her concave continent,
> When Bacon read upon his magic book.
> With seven years tossing necromantic charms,
> Poring upon dark Hecat's principles,
> I have framed out a monstrous head of brass,
> That by the enchanting forces of the devil
> Shall tell out strange and uncouth aphorisms,
> And girt fair England with a wall of brass.
> Bungay and I have watched these three-score days,
> And now our vital spirits crave some rest.

Miles is bidden to watch the head, and wake his master as soon as it shows signs of speaking. At midnight the lips move and the words "Time is," are solemnly spoken. Miles, however, scoffs at this utterance, and presently the head speaks again, "Time was." Again Miles answers with ribald joking when for the third time words come from the image. "Time is past," it says, and at the same moment lightning flashes forth, a hand appears and smashes the head with a hammer. Bacon wakes and learns what has happened, and how all his toil has been in vain. He pours curses on the terrified Miles, and so the scene ends. The next scene shows Bacon repentant, determined to abjure his magic art, and spend the rest of his life in attempting to win God's pardon. He brings the love affairs of the fair maid of Fressingfield to a happy conclusion. She marries Lacy, and the prince is reconciled to them.

Greene's play may be called the comedy, as Marlowe's is the tragedy, of the old legend. It is full of rough jovial fun, as the devils appear and play their rollicking pranks, but the country scenes in which the love story of Margaret of Fressingfield is told have a fresh and peaceful beauty.

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay was written in 1589. Three years later Greene died, in extreme poverty and misery, at the age of thirty-two. A long carouse with his friend Thomas Nash and others is said to have been the immediate cause of his death. During his last illness he was sheltered and tended by a poor shoemaker, and his dying message to his neglected and deserted wife speaks of his gratitude to this man. "Doll, I charge thee, by the love of our youth, and by my soule's rest, that thou wilt see this man paide; for if hee and his wife had not succoured me, I had died in the streete."

So, prematurely and miserably, ended the lives of these two representatives of the early Elizabethan dramatists. Both died before they had reached the fullness of their powers. Marlowe, some critics think, might, if he had lived, have equalled Shakespeare, and Greene too gave promise of great things. In their early deaths literature sustained a most serious loss.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FAERIE QUEENE

AT the time of Sidney's death his friend, Edmund Spenser, was in Ireland. Soon after the publication of the *Shepheard's Calendar* he had been appointed Private Secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, the new Lord Deputy, and in August 1580 he left England. The two friends probably took leave of one another at Penshurst, where Sidney was still in retirement, and they never met again. Spenser remained in Ireland for nearly ten years, and when the news of Sidney's death came to him there, he wrote, in memory of his friend, *Colin Clout's Mournful Ditty for the Death of Astrophel.*

In Ireland Spenser entered into a new world. The Desmond rebellion was at its height, and Lord Grey took the sternest measures to quell it. The state of the country was terrible. Death in warfare, death from an ambushed foe, death by treachery, death by pestilence, death by starvation, death at the hands of the public executioner—these were so common that men had almost ceased to look upon them with horror. The land was laid desolate. "The curse of God was so great, and the land so barren both of man and beast that whosoever did travel from one end to the other of all Munster, even from Waterford to Smerwick, about six score miles, he should not meet man, woman, or child saving in cities or towns, nor yet see any beasts save foxes, wolves, or other ravening beasts."

Lord Grey left Ireland in 1582, but Spenser remained behind, and held in the years that followed, various offices under the government. In 1586 he received a grant of the manor and castle of Kilcolman, a ruined house that had belonged to the

family of the Desmonds, and there he lived from that time forward. Kilcolman was in the midst of one of the most dangerous and disaffected districts in all Ireland. North of it stretched a desolate tract, half forest, half bog, which extended far across Munster, and here lurked savage wolves and savage men. The Desmonds had their 'great fastness' in its dreary depths, and outlaws and rebels congregated there, making it a place of terror. The country immediately surrounding Spenser's house had a wild beauty. In front lay a small lake, and the Galtee Mountains rose behind. Spenser has celebrated "Arlo, the best and fairest hill in all the holy island's heights," and the "soft rombling brooks" which run from it through the defiles in the mountains. "A most beautifull and sweet countrey as any is under heaven," it would have been, had not man laid his desolating hand upon it.

Such was the home in which Edmund Spenser wrote his great poem *The Faerie Queene*. For a long time he had been thinking over it, and as early as 1579 some portion had been written. This was submitted to Gabriel Harvey—a noted Cambridge scholar of his day and the friend and literary guide of both Sidney and Spenser—for his criticism. Harvey did not think very highly of it; it was too startling a departure from classical tradition to win his approval. He was surprised that Spenser himself should regard it as a really serious piece of work, and, he prayed that God or some good angel would put his friend in a better mind. But, happily, no such 'better mind' came to Spenser, and as soon as his official duties gave him leisure, he took up, at lonely Kilcolman, the work on which his heart had so long been set. During the three most eventful years in Elizabeth's reign—the year of Sidney's death and Shakespeare's appearance in London, the year of the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, the year of the great Armada—the *Faerie Queene* came into being. Amid scenes of strife and misery and crime, and poverty in its most revolting forms, without, as far as we can tell, companionship or encouragement, Spenser worked on.

Many elements went to the making of his great work. He

put into it, as a true poet must, the best of himself and of what life had given him. He did not, as Chaucer had done when he set himself to write the *Canterbury Tales,* look back over his life and recreate the scenes and the people that had been familiar to him. Spenser, like Chaucer, was born and bred in London. But the years he had spent there seem to have left little impression upon his mind. He wrote, it is true, in one of his poems, of " merry London my most kindly nurse," but we cannot recognize in the stories of the *Faerie Queene* the figures of any of those with whom he must have been familiar in his home, in the streets, or at the school of the Merchant Taylors' Company where he was educated. Save for a few references to " Cleopolis, the fairest citty that might be seen," there is nothing to indicate that Spenser was familiar with Elizabeth's great capital.

The reason for this difference between the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Faerie Queene* lies in the different natures of the two poets. Spenser was more highly imaginative than Chaucer. He had not so keen an appreciation of the common things of life, but loved, rather, that which was strange and unusual. He had, too, a delight in beauty beyond what is common, even in poets. Beauty of form, of colour, of sound, and above all, moral and spiritual beauty he loved with a great passion. Lovely shapes flitted before his eyes. He saw the white radiance of truth, the enchanting grace of courtesy, the grave loveliness of temperance with such a rapture of realization that he must needs make for himself some image to embody his conception and receive his worship. These images turned to living men and women beneath his hand, but they were not the men and women of common earth. Theirs must be a country of mystery and wonder; and Fortune was good to Spenser in leading him to his lonely Irish home. For certainly not in England could he have found a region which would have helped his imagination to picture that country as wild Ireland helped it. There he found the dark background against which his visionary men and women showed like forms of light; there were the forests " not perceable with power of any

starr," the "wilderness and wastful deserts" where they adventured like fairy knights and ladies in the days when the world was young, yet with the grace and dignity of high-born courtiers of the great Queen. There, too, was the bestial crew of savage and treacherous foemen, who should test the knight's valour and the lady's purity.

Yet there was a stern Puritan strain in Spenser's nature that made it impossible for him to abandon himself entirely to these seductive dreams of beauty. He could not justify himself in his own eyes if he produced a work which had no high moral purpose. His conception of a poet—a conception common to his time—was that he should be first of all a great teacher. To this end he fashioned his work. It was to be, essentially, an exposition of spiritual and moral truth. "The generall end of all the booke," he wrote, later, to his friend, Sir Walter Raleigh, "is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historicall fiction. . . . I chose the historye of King Arthure. . . . I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private morall vertues, as Aristotle hath devised; the which is the purpose of these first twelve bookes; which if I finde to be well accepted, I may be perhaps encoraged to frame the other part of polliticke vertues in his person, after hee came to be king."

The work, therefore, is an allegory, in which the characters represent certain virtues and vices. But Spenser put into it more than this. He had a lively concern in what was happening around him and like most Elizabethans, he was a keen politician; moreover, his short experience at Court had taught him that some part of the scheme of his poem must allow of the introduction of extravagant praise and flattery addressed to the Queen. For these reasons the *Faerie Queene* became a double allegory; the characters were made to take on a second signification, and to stand for important political characters of the day. Nor does this complete the "allegori-

cal tangle." "In the Faerie Queene," says Spenser, "I meane Glory in my general intention: but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene and her kingdome in Fairyland." "And yet," he goes on, "in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royall Queene or Empresse, the other of a most vertuous and beautifull Lady, the latter part in some places I doe expresse in Belphœbe." And so with other characters of the poem. They stand variously for several personages, as well as for a moral quality.

All this is very perplexing, and if the reader tries conscientiously to keep all the different threads clear in his mind as he reads, his enjoyment of the poem will be sadly marred. But he need not do this. Spenser himself often forgets all about his allegory and loses himself in the sheer delight of the story. The best way to read the *Faerie Queene* is to consider it simply as a beautiful fairy story, and disregard altogether the allegorical intention. Then nothing but pure pleasure can result.

The first three books of the poem were finished when, in 1589, Sir Walter Raleigh came to Kilcolman. He was, for the time, out of favour with the Queen; his rival, Essex, was in the ascendant. Raleigh thought it best to leave England, and he came over to Ireland to look after the estates he held there. Spenser, in his poem *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, has told the story of Raleigh's visit. In this poem the rustic style of the *Shepheard's Calendar*, is again adopted, and Spenser is 'Colin Clout' and Raleigh the 'Shepheard of the Ocean,' who appears before his friend and complains of the hardness of his lot.

> His song was all a lamentable lay
> Of great unkindness and of usage hard,
> Of Cynthia, the Ladie of the Sea,
> Which from her presence faultlesse him debar'd.

Spenser, to divert his friend's mind from these sorrows, brought out the first three books of the *Faerie Queene*. Raleigh's fine and cultured critical taste at once saw the merit of the poem,

and he urged Spenser to bring it to the Court of Elizabeth; or, as Colin Clout tells the story:

> He gan to cast great lyking to my lore,
> And great dislyking to my lucklesse lot,
> That banisht had myselfe, like wight forlore,
> Into that waste, where I was quite forgot.
> The which to leave, thenceforth he counseld mee,
> Unmeet for man in whom was ought regardfull,
> And wend with him, his Cynthia for to see;
> Whose grace was great, and bounty most rewardfull; . . .
> So what with hope of good and hate of ill,
> He me perswaded forth with him to fare.
> Nought took I with me but mine oaten quill;
> Small needments else need shepheard to prepare.

The two friends crossed the sea, and made their appearance at the Court of Elizabeth. To Raleigh's great delight, the mood of his royal mistress had changed. Cynthia smiled upon him once more, and upon his poet-companion.

> The Shepheard of the Ocean (quoth he)
> Unto that Goddesse grace me first enhanced,
> And to my oaten pipe inclined her eare,
> That she thenceforth therein 'gan take delyht;
> And it desired at timely houres to heare,
> All were my notes but rude and roughly dight;

Spenser soon perfected himself in the courtier's art of flattery, and doubtless Elizabeth afterward read with complete satisfaction his account of the impression she at this time made upon his mind.

> But if I her like ought on earth might read,
> I would her lyken to a crown of lillies,
> Upon a virgin brydes adornëd head,
> With Roses dight and Goolds and Daffadillies.

He proceeds in this strain for some time, and finding his powers quite unequal to giving any adequate idea of her transcendent qualities, he concludes:

> More fit it is t' adore with humble mind
> The image of the heavens in shape humane.

Either in gratitude for this praise, or in acknowledgment of the great merit of the *Faerie Queen*, Elizabeth gave to Spenser a pension of £50 a year.

Spenser next made his appeal to a larger public. The following entry is to be found in the register of the Stationers' Company, under the date December 1, 1589. "Entered . . . a book intytuled the fayrye Queene dysposed into xij bookes &c, authorysed under thandes of the Archbishop of Canterbery and bothe the Wardens." The poem being thus authorized, the first three books were published in 1590, with a dedication to the Queen:

To
The Most High, Mightie and Magnificent
Empresse,
Renowned for piety, vertue, and all gratious government,
ELIZABETH,
By the Grace of God,
Queene of England, Fraunce, and Ireland, and of Virginia,
Defendeur of the Faith, &c.,
Her most humble Servaunt
Edmund Spenser
Doth in all humilitie
Dedicate, present, and consecrate
These his labours,
To live with the eternitie of her fame.

The claim is a bold one—"To live with the eternitie of her fame"; but it has been justified.

It would be impossible here even to outline all the stories contained in the *Faerie Queene*. We will quote Spenser's own account of his general plan, and then deal, very briefly, with the First Book. "I devise," he says in the letter to Raleigh, part of which has been already quoted, "that the Faery Queene kept her Annuall feaste xii dayes; uppon which xii severall dayes, the occasions of the xii severall adventures hapned, which being undertaken by xii severall knights, are in these xii books severally handled and discoursed. The first was this. In the beginning of the feast, there presented him selfe a tall clownishe younge man, who falling before the Queene of Faries desired a boone (as the manner then was) which during that feast she might not refuse; which was that hee might have the achievement of any adventure, which during that feaste should happen: that being graunted, he rested him on the floore, unfitte through his rusticity for a better place.

Soone after entred a faire Ladye in mourning weedes, riding on a white Asse, with a dwarfe behinde her leading a warlike steed, that bore the Armes of a knight, and his speare in the dwarfe's hand. Shee, falling before the Queene of Faeries, complayned that her father and mother, an ancient King and Queene, had beene by an huge dragon many years shut up in a brasen Castle, who thence suffered them not to yssew; and therefore besought the Faery Queene to assygne her some one of her knights to take on him that exployt. Presently that clownish person, upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queene much wondering and the Lady much gainsaying yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end the Lady told him, that unlesse that armour which she brought would serve him (that is, the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul, Ephes. VI.) that he could not succeed in that enterprise; which being forthwith put upon him, with dew furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in al that company, and was well liked of the lady. And eftsoones taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that straunge courser, he went forth with her on that adventure: where beginneth the first booke, viz.:

A gentle knight was pricking on the plaine, &c.

This "tall clownishe younge man" is the Knight of Holiness, afterward St. George, the patron Saint of England. The lady is Una, or Truth, one of the loveliest in all the bright throng of Spenser's heroines. It is she who upholds her knight through the toils and adventures of their quest, who reclaims him from error, strengthens him when he is weak, and rewards him in the hour of victory. Spenser gives, throughout the book, a series of pictures of Una. He shows her first when she starts with the Red Cross Knight:

A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low,
And over all a black stole shee did throw,
As one that inly mournd: so was she sad,
And heavie sat upon her palfrey slow;
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had.
And by her in a line a milk white lambe she lad.

Una is rescued by a Troupe of Fauns and Satyrs 150

Gertrude Demain Hammond, R.I.

And again:

> One day nigh wearie of the yrksome way,
> From her unhastie beast she did alight,
> And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay
> In secret shadow, farre from all men's sight:
> From her fayre head her fillet she undight,
> And layd her stole aside. Her angel's face
> As the great eye of heaven shyned bright;
> And made a sunshine in the shadie place;
> Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.

Marvels of every kind meet the knight and his lady as they proceed on their journey. In "a hollow cave amid the thickest woods" they encounter the foul monster Error, whom the knight slays. He becomes subject to the spells of an Enchanter, Archemago, who deceives him by means of false dreams, brought from the house of Morpheus, where

> A trickling streame from high rock tumbling downe,
> And ever-drizling raine upon the loft,
> Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
> Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne:
> No other noyse, nor people's troublous cryes,
> As still are wont t' annoy the walled towne,
> Might there be heard; but careless Quiet lyes,
> Wrapt in eternall silence far from enemyes.

The knight forsakes Una, and takes another lady, the false Duessa. Una, "forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd" wanders "through woods and wastnesse wide" seeking her champion; a lion constitutes himself her bodyguard, until he is slain by the Paynim Knight, Sansloy; from Sansloy Una is rescued by a troupe of Faunes and Satyres, and for a time she lives with them in the wood as their queen, teaching them "trew sacred lore, which from her sweet lips did redound." From this wood by the help of the rustic Knight Satyrane, she escapes, meets Prince Arthur, and is courteously protected by him. Meanwhile the Red Cross knight is taken by Duessa to the House of Pride, where he fights with and overcomes Sansjoy, brother to Sansfoy and Sansloy. By the arts of Duessa, Sansjoy is conveyed from the field, and taken to regions below the earth to be cured. The knight, warned by his attendant dwarf, who has seen the horrors in the secret parts of the House of Pride, steals away

the next morning, is taken prisoner by the giant Orgoglio, and rescued by Prince Arthur, whom Una brings to his aid, she having met the dwarf and learnt from him of his master's plight. Orgoglio is killed and his house overthrown by Prince Arthur. The Red Cross Knight, feeble and unfit for warfare, is taken by Una to the House of Holiness, where he is strengthened and made ready for his struggle with the dragon, the end of his quest. For two days he fights with this terrible monster, and at last kills him, and rescues Una's father and mother. The last canto is taken up with an account of the betrothal and marriage of Una and the Red Cross Knight.

The second book deals in a similar manner with the adventures of Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance; the third with those of Britomart, the maiden Knight of Chastity.

For about a year and a half after the publication of the first three books of the *Faerie Queene*, Spenser remained in England, enjoying the fame which his work had brought him. Everywhere he was acclaimed as a great poet; generous and lavish praise was poured upon him by his brother-poets, and men of letters. During this year and a half he wrote several of his shorter poems. Then, disappointed that his great work had not brought him some substantial result in the shape of a liberal pension or a lucrative office, he returned to Ireland. Here, in 1594, he married; and though we know nothing at all about his wife except that her name was Elizabeth, the glorious marriage hymn, *Epithalamium*, which her husband wrote in her honour, raises her in our imaginations to a place beside the radiant figures of Una and Britomart. At Kilcolman, lonely no longer, Spenser during the following year finished the next three books of the *Faerie Queene*, of which the heroes are the Knight of Friendship, the Knight of Justice, the Knight of Courtesy. In 1595 he came to England to see after the publication of these books, which completed the first half of his projected work. In less than a year he was back in Ireland. He took up the life which, in spite of some hankerings after the splendour of the Court, and the cultured society which London alone could afford, he really loved the best. Children

were born to him, he had leisure for the work in which he delighted, his home was lovely and peaceful. But peace in the Ireland of that time was, as Spenser well knew, an insecure possession. In 1598 a new rebellion broke out. The rebels poured from their fastness on Arlo Hill and Kilcolman was sacked and burnt. Spenser and his wife, broken-hearted, escaped to Cork, and then to England. A few months later, January 16, 1599, Spenser died. There is a tradition, founded on a statement of Ben Jonson, that he died in want. "He died," said Jonson, "for lack of bread, in King Street, Westminster, and refused twenty pieces sent to him by my Lord of Essex, saying that he had no time to spend them." But there is no confirmation of this statement, and it seems unlikely that it is true. Spenser was buried, with all honour, in Westminster Abbey, near the grave of his great predecessor, Chaucer.

We do not know how much more of his great work was completed before his death. Perhaps the fire at Kilcolman robbed us of many cantos we might otherwise have had. One fragment on *Mutabilitie*, supposed to be part of the book of Constancy, was printed with the other six books, by a bookseller, in 1609, but where it came from we do not know. The work remains incomplete, but even in its incompleteness it suffices to give Spenser a place in the front rank of our poets.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE

I

THE year 1564 was of all years the most important for the Elizabethan drama. In the stormy days of February was born the wild and unhappy genius, Christopher Marlowe; and when gusty March had passed and the rain and sunshine of April had made the earth beautiful, there came into it another, a greater, and a happier genius, William Shakespeare. He was born in one of the loveliest districts of the English Midlands. The quiet Avon flowed through it, and on either side of the river there stretched, in Shakespeare's day, wide, rich meadow-lands, starry and fragrant with "daisies pied and violets blue, and lady-smocks all silver-white." Wild flowers grew along the river banks, and in every shady woodland glade,—'pale primroses' and 'bold oxlips,' the 'azured harebell' and the 'lush eglantine.' To the north lay the Forest of Arden, then really a forest, and a paradise of woodland beauty. If there was nothing grand or wild to fire the imagination there was everywhere a sweet and peaceful loveliness that stirred the heart.

On the left bank of the Avon, just where the old Roman road had crossed the river by means of a ford, stood the little town of Stratford. A fine stone bridge, which is still standing, had replaced the ford, and the grey church—old even when Shakespeare was a lad—stood by the river side. Quaint streets of dark-timbered houses made up the little town. The house in Henley Street, where Shakespeare was born was gabled and picturesque, like its neighbours, with small, low-ceilinged rooms and heavy oaken beams. John Shakespeare, the poet's

father, had been living there for twelve years at the time of his son's birth. He was a trader in all sorts of farm produce, especially in wool, leather and meat, so that he has been variously described as a glover, butcher, and farmer. He belonged to an old yeoman family that had been settled in Warwickshire for many generations. He was a busy and prosperous man, standing high in the estimation of his fellow townsmen. In 1565 he became an alderman of Stratford, and in 1568 reached the dignity of Bailiff or Mayor.

William Shakespeare grew up in a comfortable home, well supplied with the necessities of life, and probably also with such luxuries as the age afforded. He grew up also with that sense of belonging to a family well reputed and highly esteemed, which is so important an element in a wholesome and stimulating self-respect. From his father it does not seem likely that he received very much help or guidance. John Shakespeare appears to have been one of those well-meaning but ineffectual men, of restless energy and short-sighted optimism, who take up with enthusiasm a number of projects, but fail to make a lasting success of anything. He was constantly going 'to law,' and it is probable that his son William owes the knowledge of legal procedure and legal terms which has led some critics to declare that he must have been familiar with the work of a lawyer's office, to the conversations which he heard at home about his father's many law suits. These, however, during his early boyhood, were mainly concerned with the recovery of small debts, and did not affect the prosperity of the family. John Shakespeare's position in the town, joined with his genial, social temper, and the quiet, high-bred courtesy of his wife—she was of gentle birth, and, in a modest way, an heiress—must have attracted many visitors to the house in Henley Street, and made it a centre of social as well as of family life.

In due time, as we believe, William Shakespeare went to the old Grammar School of Stratford-on-Avon. Here most of his time was spent in the study of Latin, and he learnt to read with a fair amount of facility the Latin authors of the ordinary schoolboy. Lilly's Latin Grammar, then universally used in

schools, he probably knew by heart, for he quotes sentences from it in *Love's Labour's Lost* and in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Sir Hugh Evans (*Merry Wives*), the pedantic Holofernes (*Love's Labour's Lost*) and the conjuring schoolmaster Pinch (*Comedy of Errors*) probably embody many of Shakespeare's recollections of the masters who taught him at the Stratford Grammar School.

We have no record of Shakespeare's school-days, nothing to tell us whether he ranked with the good boys or with the dunces, no hint as to who were his friends, or, most important of all, how he occupied himself when school was over. Doubtless he played with the other boys at the games which were popular in Elizabethan days. But we think that he must have spent a great deal of his time in roaming over the lovely country which lay around his home, learning its features so well that through all his years in London they were never forgotten; making friends with all the shepherds, pedlars, innkeepers, village constables, sextons—even with the beggars and the village 'innocents'—to be found in the countryside; listening to all the stories they could be induced to tell him; picking up local traditions, old ballads, proverbs, and folk tales; learning the homely, racy, expressive English which the good yeoman of the Midlands had at command. We know that he must have taken a keen interest in the field-sports of the neighbourhood, for he shows in his plays a familiar acquaintance with hunting, hawking and coursing, and metaphors drawn from them are common. Yet if we may judge from the two most notable references in his works, his sympathies were often with the hunted, not with the hunter. He noted the "poor sequester'd stag That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt," and marked how "the big round tears Coursed one another down his innocent nose In piteous chase." He saw the hare, "poor Wat, far off upon a hill, Stand on his hinder legs with listening ear, To hearken if his foes pursue him still," and he speaks with sorrowful pity of the "dew-bedabbled wretch," who was so sorely bested.

By the time William Shakespeare was ten years old he had

1. Shakespeare's Birthplace 156
2. Ann Hathaway's Cottage

three brothers and a sister for playfellows in his Henley Street home. But the old easy comfort of the house was changing. The father's business had declined and he was harassed by want of money. Debts began to accumulate, and the whisper went round the town that the once prosperous tradesman was in serious difficulties. John Shakespeare seems to have struggled desperately to retrieve his position, but each year as it passed saw him in a more hopeless case. Of the two farms owned by his wife one was mortgaged in 1578, the other sold in 1579. Out of this business arose a vexatious law-suit, which helped to make him still poorer. In 1585 a distraint was ordered upon his goods, which resulted in a declaration that he possessed no goods which could be distrained upon. Next year he was deprived of his position as Alderman, because he "doth not come to hall, nor hath not done of long time." Poor John Shakespeare! Perhaps he was afraid to venture out of his own home for fear of arrest; and so, with all his other losses, his civic dignity, too, departed from him.

Long before this time—in 1577 says a tradition, to which the circumstances of the case give strong support—Shakespeare had left school. He was the eldest son, and must do what he could to help the family in those evil days. How he spent the next few years we do not know. One biographer says that he "exercised his father's trade" of butcher, and adds, "but when he kill'd a calf, he would doe it in a high style and make a speech." We may perhaps infer from this that by 1577 John Shakespeare had given up, one by one, the other branches of trade which he had formerly carried on, and was now struggling to make a living as a butcher. We can imagine how uncongenial such a life must have been to his son, who, however, does not seem to have made any very determined effort to escape from it. The few slight notices we can gather of his life at this time, seem to show him as an idler, seeking abroad some relief from the harshness of his home circumstances. In 1582, when he was only eighteen years old, and when his father's difficulties were at an acute stage, he married. His wife was Ann Hathaway, daughter of a husbandman of

Shottery, a small hamlet separated by a few fields from the town of Stratford. Even this new responsibility does not seem to have roused Shakespeare to any great effort. How the young couple lived for the next few years it is hard to imagine. Ann Hathaway had inherited a little money from her father, and Shakespeare perhaps, managed to find some sort of occupation; tradition says that he became a schoolmaster. In 1583 a daughter was born to him, and in 1585 a twin son and daughter.

By this time, it would seem, the better mind of William Shakespeare was coming back to him. He had allowed himself to become disheartened by the unfavourable circumstances of his life, had drifted along without any set purpose, and had yielded easily to the temptations that came in his way. Now the resolution that had so much influence on his after career was slowly forming in his mind—the resolution to mend his father's broken fortunes, to make the name of Shakespeare respected once more in Stratford-on-Avon, to give his family a happy prosperous home in his native place. The careless, happy-tempered lad whose good looks and frank manners had gained for him many friends in whose company it was so easy and pleasant to be idle, was soon to develop into the brave-hearted strenuous worker who, from the humblest beginning, rose by his own exertions to fame and fortune.

The crisis came through an incident which made Shakespeare's departure from Stratford a necessity. "He had," wrote Nicholas Rowe, his first biographer, "by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and among them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stalking, engaged him with them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him, and though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business

and family in Warwickshire and shelter himself in London." It has even been said that Sir Thomas Lucy caused him to be whipped. The story, probably, is not correct in all its details, but various small pieces of evidence now available seem to show that Shakespeare really was involved in a poaching affray on Sir Thomas Lucy's ground. Six or seven years after, when he was writing *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, he recalled this incident. But all bitterness of feeling had long since passed away, and he contented himself with holding up his old enemy to the ridicule of his own and succeeding ages as the immortal Justice Shallow with the "dozen white luces in his coat."

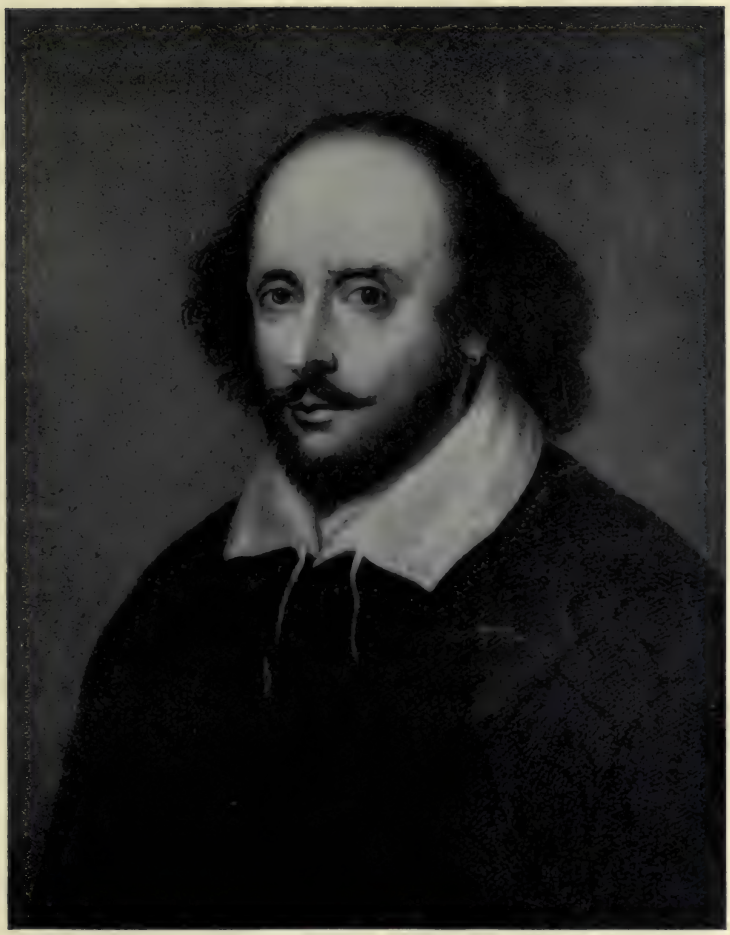
II

By 1586 or 1587 Shakespeare, we believe, was in London, unknown and nearly penniless. One friend he had—Richard Field, a Stratford man, son of a friend of Shakespeare's father. We believe that Field did his best for his young townsman, but he could give him little help in the matter that had brought him to London. William Shakespeare must make his way for himself. Nothing daunted, he set to work. From the first he seems to have turned to the theatres as the best means of enabling him to gain a livelihood. He brought from Stratford many memories of the players who had from time to time visited the town, and of the pageants and shows which the taste of the age had caused to become common throughout the country. He had, perhaps, witnessed the historic revels at Kenilworth in 1575, for Kenilworth was only fifteen miles from Stratford, and Shakespeare's father might well have ridden over with his son on such a famous occasion. Like many other young men, he had, perhaps, dreamt of the stage as providing him with the opportunity of a glorious and triumphant career. But the road by which he approached the object of his desire was a very humble one. He seems to have hung about the doors of the theatres waiting for chance employment, for a tradition of the time tells us that he gained a meagre living by holding the horses of gentlemen who came to the play. Very

soon he was noticed by the authorities of the theatre, and was "received into the company then in being, at first in a very mean rank." So says Nicholas Rowe, and there is a stage tradition that Shakespeare's first employment was that of call-boy. Whatever it was he had to do, he did it well, and made himself so useful and notable, either by his suggestions or by help given in emergencies, that he was quickly advanced. By 1594 he was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company of players, and was of some note as an actor.

All this time—the years, be it remembered, which preceded and followed the coming of the Armada—Shakespeare was probably living poorly enough—lodging in an attic in an obscure and dirty street, dining at tavern ordinaries, put to all kinds of shifts, and suffering many hardships. But he suffered them in a gay and gallant spirit, and he turned with an eager zest to the compensations which life in Elizabethan London offered. There were the great thoroughfares of the City where on any holiday one might see some splendid pageant or gorgeous procession, and where, even on working days, there were life and colour enough to delight a poet. There were the bookstalls in St. Paul's Churchyard, with their "innumerable sorts of English books and infinite fardels of printed pamphlets," and even a poor actor might sometimes spare the pence which would buy one of the new fashioned 'novellas' or a translation of some old classic. Perhaps it was at one of these bookstalls that Shakespeare bought the copy of Holinshed's *Chronicle*, and of Plutarch's *Lives*, which we think he certainly possessed. In the audiences that gathered at the theatres, too, he must have found much that both interested and delighted him. All classes of society were represented, from the splendid court gallant who sat upon the stage, to the pickpocket who quietly plied his trade among the crowd of poor and ragged citizens that pushed and struggled for standing room in the pit—a large space, without flooring or seats, in the middle of the theatre. For companions Shakespeare had his fellow actors, with several of whom he formed lifelong friendships.

We do not know what relations existed between Shakespeare



William Shakespeare 160
From the Chandos Portrait]

and the 'University Wits.' He did not, it would seem, join in their riotous living, but he probably met them in the theatres and the taverns of the town. It is abundantly evident that he felt a real admiration for Marlowe, and strove, in his early works, to copy his great predecessor, whom he looked upon as his master in dramatic art; but we have no conclusive evidence that in the seven years during which they were both living and working in London, the two poets ever met. Robert Greene, we know, was bitterly jealous of Shakespeare. In the *Groatsworth of Wit* Greene says, "There is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tyger's heart wrappt in a players hide* supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum* is, in his owne conceit, the only Shakescene in a countrie."

This attack by Greene is valuable in many ways. It is a distinct reference to Shakespeare and proves that, by 1592, he had made for himself some reputation not only as an actor but as a playwright. The words "Tyger's heart wrappt in a players hide" are a parody of a line in the third part of *Henry VI*, and show that this play was written before 1592. The accusation that Shakespeare had taken the credit for work that really belonged to Greene and his friends, points to the fact that Shakespeare began his career as a dramatist in the ordinary way—by furbishing up old plays. In those days plays were sold outright to the managers of theatres, and, as occasion required, the staff of the theatre was employed to touch up or add to any play so as to make it more acceptable to the changing taste of the public. Shakespeare had probably been employed in this way on a play called *Henry VI*, which, on March 3, 1592, was acted at the Rose Theatre. The author of the original play we do not know. It was probably one of a large number written to minister to the patriotic feelings which were uppermost in men's minds during the years which followed England's great victory over Spain. Needy dramatists took the work of the old chroniclers, and seizing upon likely dramatic passages, hastily turned them into rough plays which would satisfy the

demand of the playgoers, and fill the theatre. It is not unlikely that Greene and Marlowe, and perhaps Peele, had joined in producing the old play which Shakespeare revised.

Henry VI was received with enthusiasm. "How would it have joyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French)," wrote Nash, "to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and have his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at severall times) who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding!"

Very soon afterward appeared another play, continuing the historical narrative—"The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous houses of York and Lancaster"; and in 1593 came still another continuation under the name of "The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henry the Sixt, as it was sundrie times acted by the Earl of Pembroke his servants." All three were afterward again thoroughly revised by Shakespeare. How much of these plays, as we now have them, was written by him we do not know. Critics allot to him only a small part of *Henry VI*; of the second play it is agreed that the larger part is his; of the third, less than a half. The three plays were published, after Shakespeare's death, as the first, second and third parts of *Henry VI*.

It is almost certain that at least in a part of the work of revision, Shakespeare was helped by some other dramatist, and critics are inclined to think that this helper was Christopher Marlowe. Marlowe died June 1, 1593, possibly before the revision was completed, but some lines in the first two plays are so distinctly in his vein that it is difficult to believe he did not write them (*e.g.* II Hy. VI; IV, i. 1–11).

So began the series of Chronicle plays which was continued in *Richard III*, *Richard II*, *King John*, *Henry IV*, and *Henry V*, all probably written before 1599.

During this early period of dramatic authorship Shakespeare wrote also a series of light and mirthful comedies—*Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Two Gentlemen of*

Verona, A Midsummer Night's Dream—all of which show more or less the influence of John Lyly; one tragedy—*Romeo and Juliet*—also belongs to this period.

III

All this time Shakespeare's reputation as a poet, playwright, and actor had been steadily rising. He began to be known at the court. Twice he acted before Elizabeth during the Christmas season 1594. He was fortunate enough to gain the goodwill of the Earl of Southampton, one of the most magnificent of the young gallants who made the Court of Elizabeth splendid. Southampton was a munificent patron of letters, and to Shakespeare he showed not only kindness, but real friendship. The poet on his part felt a warm and affectionate attachment to his young patron. To Southampton he dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, two poems published in 1593 and 1594 respectively, and it is almost certain that the 'fair friend' on whom in his *Sonnets* he lavishes such loving praise, is Southampton also.

Sir Sidney Lee calculates that in the years immediately preceding 1599 Shakespeare's income was over £130, that is about £1040 of our present money. His easier circumstances made it possible for him to pay longer and more frequent visits to Stratford-on-Avon, and to take the first steps in carrying out the purpose which, through all these years, he had kept steadily before him. John Shakespeare was in even worse difficulties than he had been at the time of his son leaving Stratford, and he and his wife shared with Shakespeare's wife and children the prosperity which the years in London had brought.

In 1596 Shakespeare's only son, Hamnet, died. This must have been a terrible blow both to Shakespeare's affections and to his ambition of founding a family in his native place. It has been conjectured that Prince Arthur in *King John* was drawn from this son, of whom, otherwise, we know nothing. But in spite of this loss, he persevered in his intention. In 1597 he bought New Place, the largest and most important dwelling-

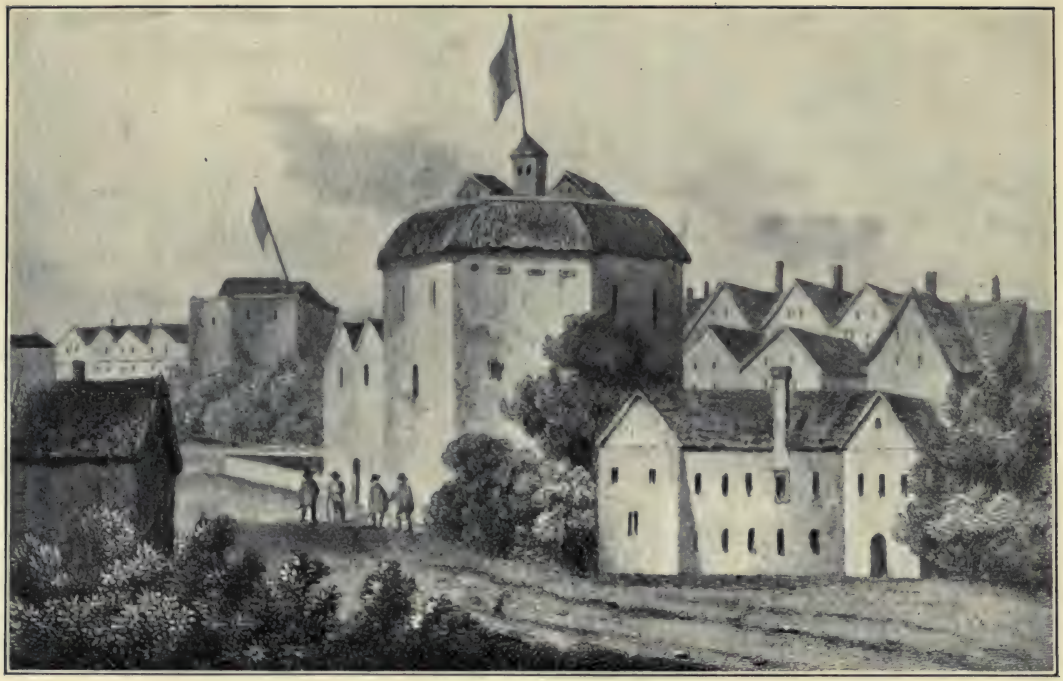
house in Stratford, for £60, or £480 of our present money. It was in an almost ruinous condition, and for some years Shakespeare did not inhabit it, but occupied himself in restoring and beautifying the house, in building new barns, and in buying, as opportunity occurred, adjacent lands to enlarge and enrich his domain. From this time onward he spent a considerable part of each year in his native town.

Shakespeare had now passed through the early experimental stages, during which he was learning his art from the work of other dramatists and from the actual business of the theatre. The year 1598 saw the completion of the series of historical plays; and during the next two years Shakespeare wrote his three most perfect comedies—*Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. It is difficult to select from this trio one play which has a special claim to consideration, but *As You Like It* perhaps illustrates more clearly than either of the others some of Shakespeare's characteristic qualities and methods, and we will therefore briefly review that. In 1590 was published a novel by Thomas Lodge, called *Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacy*. *Rosalynde* was to some extent founded upon an older story, *The Cook's Tale of Gamelyn*, which has been wrongly attributed to Chaucer, and included in some editions of *The Canterbury Tales*. On this novel Shakespeare founded his play of *As You Like It*, though he made many alterations, introduced several new characters, and transformed the whole tone and spirit of the earlier work. It is the finest example of Shakespeare's 'open air' comedies. In *Love's Labour's Lost* we are taken to the park of the King of Navarre, we catch sight of the royal hunting-party and stand under the cool shade of the sycamore-trees. But the men and women we meet are of the court, and they speak the artificial language of *Euphues*; the wit sparkles so brilliantly below that we forget to look up and see the bright sun above. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* we spend a summer night in an enchanted wood, where 'faint primrose beds' and banks of wild thyme shine under the white radiance of a magic moon. But even here, altogether delightful as the atmosphere is, there

is a feeling of seclusion, and we know that we could never find our way to that forest by the light of the everyday sun. In *As You Like It* we are in the veritable Forest of Arden that Shakespeare knew and loved; the free winds blow over us, sometimes keen and biting, but always healthful, the noonday sun shines with fullest light, the common sounds of woodland life are in our ears. Professor Sir Walter Raleigh, in a striking passage, has pointed out with what wonderful skill these effects are gained. "A minute examination of the play has given a curious result. No single bird, or insect, or flower, is mentioned by name. The words 'flower' and 'leaf' do not occur. The trees of the forest are the oak, the hawthorn, the palm-tree, and the olive. For animals, there are the deer, one lioness, and one green and gilded snake. The season is not easy to determine; perhaps it is summer; we hear only of the biting cold and the wintry wind. 'But these are all lies,' as Rosalind would say, and the dramatic truth has been expressed by those critics who speak of 'the leafy solitudes sweet with the song of birds.' It is nothing to the outlaws that their forest is poorly furnished with stage-properties; they fleet the time carelessly in a paradise of gaiety and indolence, and there is summer in their hearts. So Shakespeare attains his end without the bathos of an allusion to the soft green grass, which must needs have been represented by the boards of the theatre." For it must be remembered that in Shakespeare's day no scenery of effects were used. "You shall have Asia of the one side, and Africke of the other," wrote Sir Philip Sidney, "and so many other under-kingdomes, that the Plaier when hee comes in must ever begin with telling where hee is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now shall you have three Ladies walke to gather flowers, and then we must beleeve the stage to be a garden. By and by wee heare newes of shipwracke in the same place, then wee are to blame if we accept it not for a rocke; . . . while in the meantime two armies flie in, represented with foure swordes and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field." Rosalind, the heroine, takes her place among the company of

girl-characters which is one of the notable glories of Shakespeare's works. Like her namesake in *Love's Labour's Lost* and like Beatrice in *Much Ado*, she is high-spirited and mischief-loving; like them, too, she has a sharp edge to her tongue, and can hold her own in a combat of wit with any opponent. But she is not quite so brilliant as these others, a shade softer, and just a trifle sweeter. She is younger and more girlish; there are touches which seem to indicate that she has not long left the 'tomboy' stage of childhood behind her. It has been suggested that Shakespeare studied his girl-heroines from his own daughter, Judith. In 1599, when, as we believe, Shakespeare paid his first long visit to Stratford, Judith was about sixteen, a fresh, bright, country girl with a share of her father's wit, and a share of his good looks. It is quite possible that Shakespeare was captivated by the graces of his own daughter, and that Judith found in her famous father a playfellow beyond all her previous imaginings. So that Rosalind, daughter of a banished Duke, who sought her father in the French forest, may be really Judith, daughter of William Shakespeare, who, in the English forest by the River Avon, showed her father how sweet and bright and lovable a girl heroine should be.

An additional interest is given to *As You Like It* by the probability that Shakespeare himself took the part of Adam when the play was first produced. Oldys (an early biographer of Shakespeare) says that a younger brother of the poet, who was alive after the Restoration, used in his old age to speak of how he had often come up to London to see his brother act. Naturally, he was closely and eagerly questioned. "But all that could be recollected from him of his brother Will in that station was the faint, general and almost lost ideas he had of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies, wherein, being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company, who were eating, and one of them sung a song."



The Globe Theatre in 1613

From a Photogravure in the "Century Shakespeare"

(To this period also belong *The Merchant of Venice, All's Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida* and *Julius Cæsar.*)

IV

The end of the sixteenth century marks, roughly speaking, a turning-point in Shakespeare's career. He had by this time attained the object of his early ambition. He had made for himself a name and position in his native town; he was no longer young Will Shakespeare, the idle, poaching son of the ruined butcher, but the wealthy Mr. William Shakespeare, gentleman, of New Place, who had made the name of Stratford famous even in far-off London. He had established his family honourably in the comfortable house he had bought and restored. He was able to make easy the last days of his father, who died in 1601, and to provide a home for his mother in the old house in Henley Street, until she too died, in 1608.

In London Shakespeare was admired and respected. He was a popular actor and a noted playwright. The new Globe Theatre, which had been built on the Bankside, Southwark, in 1599, was largely under his management, and he drew a considerable share of the profits which were made in it. He was high in the favour of James I as he had been in that of Elizabeth. His life was, apparently, cheerful and sociable; his company was sought after by men of all ranks. Tradition says that he was the centre of the brilliant group that assembled at the Mermaid Tavern, Bread Street, where Sir Walter Raleigh had established a kind of club for literary men, and of which Beaumont writes in his well-known lines

> What things have we seen
> Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
> So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
> As if that every one from whom they came
> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
> And had resolved to live a fool the rest
> Of his dull life.

But as we pass on to the examination of the plays that Shakespeare produced in the early years of the new century all

this brightness of prosperity disappears, and we are aware of a black cloud into which our poet has entered. It is not a cloud that dimmed his genius, for some of his most wonderful works were written while it overshadowed him. It is a cloud which, for a time, hid from him the bright face of heaven, and all the simple, beautiful and joyous things in which his nature had delighted. It made the earth a dark, unhappy place, where men walked blindly, oppressed by the awful and mysterious dispensations of a terrible God. Perhaps some great sorrow of which we know nothing came to Shakespeare at this time; perhaps the change we notice in him is simply due to the necessity imposed upon a soul such as his of entering into all the deep and dark places of human nature. He may have suffered in an attempt to consider, if not to solve, the terrible problems which present themselves to every thoughtful man and woman on the way through life. However this may be, all the plays written between 1602 and 1608 show an ever-increasing sense of the strength of the powers of evil in the world, of dark depths of sin and sorrow toward which man, thoughtlessly or blindly, advances.

The four great tragedies—*Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*—written between 1602 and 1606—give the fullest expression to the thoughts which seem to have possessed Shakespeare's mind at this period. In *King Lear*, for example, there is depicted an agony so stupendous and heart-breaking that to contemplate it calmly is almost an impossibility. Dr. Johnson is among those who have acknowledged that they have shrunk in dread from reading or witnessing the play a second time, so deep and awful is the impression which the sufferings of the poor mad king have made upon them. It is illuminating to note the basis on which Shakespeare builds up this, his most heartrending tragedy. There is no fearful national convulsion, no devastating war, no deeply laid plot. The rending of natural, human ties, the rejection of natural, human duties—from these apparently small beginnings the great agony proceeds.

Yet we are shown the other side also. If Shakespeare

makes us shudder at the realization that the utter disregard of filial obligations may tend to produce fiends such as Regan and Goneril, he uplifts us, too, by reminding us that the simple, loving fulfilment of a daughter's duty suffices to make a heroine. A stern sense of the compulsion laid upon a man to do the plain duty appointed for him and not evade it on any pretext, however specious, constrains Shakespeare in his creation of Lear; but it constrains him also in his creation of Kent and Edmund and the poor, faithful fool. The cloud was thick and black, but Shakespeare never lost his faith that somewhere behind it there was still a sun in the heavens; and soon the sun shone through the clouds, and made a glorious ending to the poet's splendid, though not unclouded day.

The last years of Shakespeare's life were spent mainly at Stratford. His wife and his daughter Judith were with him at New Place. His elder daughter, Susannah, had, in 1607, married John Hall, a somewhat famous doctor of medicine, and there was a little daughter now in their home. Friends from London came occasionally to Stratford to visit Shakespeare in his retirement. His actor friends—Richard Burbage, who had taken the part of the hero in almost all the Shakespeare's tragedies, Heminge and Condell, who were his literary executors and edited the folio edition of his works after his death—these came many times. The poets, Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton, came at least once. In this happy retirement the great moral problems of the world ceased to oppress Shakespeare's mind. He had passed through his season of doubt and stress. He had met his difficulties bravely, not weakly shrinking from the pain that the encounter involved, or thrusting unwelcome questions aside to be dealt with at a more convenient season. He had won, through struggle, to peace.

In these last years he wrote three dramas—*The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*—which it is difficult to classify. They are comedies in that they end happily, but they have not the mirthful comedy spirit; they are full of a radiant loveliness which transfigures and etherealizes them without

taking away from their warm living interest. The title of 'romance' has been given to these plays to distinguish them from the earlier comedies.

The difference between the romances and the comedies may be illustrated by a comparison of the heroine of each. Perdita, Imogen and Miranda stand apart. There has been nothing like them in any of the previous plays. They are neither brilliant nor witty, they have none of the charming airs and graces that delight us in Shakespeare's earlier creations. They are sweet, lovable, loving girls, of an exquisite purity and rare beauty of character that, in some wonderful way is shown in their every word and action. It is perhaps not too fanciful to see Judith Shakespeare once more as her father's model. He has learnt now that there is more in his daughter than the high spirits and the grace which first charmed him; he has learnt to reverence girlhood in her person, and to spend all his creative skill in doing it honour.

The last play that Shakespeare wrote was, as we suppose, *The Tempest*, and with this he crowned all his previous achievements. Dainty Ariel is the Puck of *Midsummer Night's Dream* etherealized and glorified by the 'delicate air' of the enchanted island. The whole play is, like the island, full of "sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not." In Prospero it is inevitable that we should see some shadow of the writer of the play. Shakespeare himself, one cannot help thinking, meant to signify an intention of bringing his work as a dramatist to a close when he wrote the words

> I'll break my staff,
> Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
> And deeper than did ever plummet sound
> I'll drown my book.

This was his farewell, and though he lived some six years longer, he wrote no more. He died on April 23, 1616, at the age of fifty-two, and was buried in the chancel of Stratford Church.

[During Shakespeare's lifetime sixteen of his plays had been

The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon

Photo. G.W.R. Co.

published in quarto, at sixpence each. In 1623 John Heminge and Henry Condell, assisted by various printers and publishers, brought out the first complete edition of his works, of which about a hundred and forty copies are known to be still in existence. This edition is now known as the First Folio.]

CHAPTER XIX

ENGLAND'S HELICON

HELICON, we are told, was a mountain in Bœotia, in Greece, sacred to Apollo and the Muses; on it were situated the fountains Hippocrene and Aganippe, the grand sources of poetic inspiration. One is inclined to believe that, during the Elizabethan age, this mountain was, by art or magic, transported to the realms of England; and that the man, whoever he might be, who gave the title of *England's Helicon* to the collection of verse published in 1600, was attempting no fanciful piece of symbolism, but was making open reference to a well-known fact. It is difficult to account, except on some such theory as this, for the great impulse which set all England singing during the last twenty years of the reign of Elizabeth. Never was there such a great and tuneful chorus. Men sang freely, carelessly, joyously, because the singing impulse was in them, and because all around them others were singing too. They sang of sweet May mornings and fragrant summer nights, of love and kisses and maids with hair of beaten gold and eyes like stars; of daffodils and primroses and winking Mary-buds, of frisking lambs and morn-waking birds; of gowns of green and quoifs and laces and stomachers; of curds and cream and nappy ale. They sang, too, of graver things—of truth and falsehood, of sorrow and death, and of the service due to the King of Heaven. But whatever the theme, the song came with a swing and a lilt delightful to the ear. The writers invented new measures and cadences, and ornamented them with little joyous trills and merry refrains; or made the sound of fairy feet dance through them, marking a magic rhythm; or gaily "hunted the letter"

down the winding ways of a dainty ditty—all for sheer delight in their work. There is nothing in all literature like the lyrics that were written in this wonderful age. As we read them now they sing themselves in our ears after their old enchanting fashion, and that joy of living which their makers felt so strongly stirs all our pulses.

For our share in these treasures of the Elizabethan age we are largely indebted to men who, like the unknown compilers of *England's Helicon,* collected and preserved them. For the writers themselves took small trouble in this matter. The song had served to express some passing mood, to make, for a moment, the air vocal for the singer and his friends, and having done this, might be forgotten.

At the Court of Elizabeth men like Spenser, Raleigh and Sidney led a chorus of song, in which almost every courtier took part. Each set of verses as it was written was handed about among the writer's friends, perhaps set to music and sung, copied in ladies' albums, talked about, imitated. In the house of every nobleman, gentleman and merchant, the same sort of thing, in its degree, was going on. Musicians were busy setting the verses to music, for music, both vocal and instrumental, was widely cultivated ; the two arts of poetry and music had, indeed, an immense influence the one upon the other. At the theatres the crowded audiences demanded that music should form part of the entertainment, and Greene, Lodge, Peele, and Shakespeare himself, followed the example set by John Lyly, and introduced into their plays the charming lyrics which form so important a part of the Elizabethan collection.

It is not to be supposed that among this mass of production all songs were of equal merit. Some, indeed, of those that have come down to us, are merely mechanical and imitated jingles. But by far the greater part have fluency, charm and tunefulness, and many are great lyric poems.

Naturally, enterprising booksellers disapproved of the waste of precious material which was so lavishly and so constantly going on. As early as 1557 an attempt had been made to collect some of the most famous of the lyrics of the

time, and this had resulted in the publication of *Tottell's Miscellany*. It contained the poems of Surrey, Wyatt, and about forty other writers. At intervals during the reign of Elizabeth other collections appeared. It is from these collections, and from the song books, also published in large numbers during this period, that most of the treasures of Elizabethan lyric poetry have been recovered.

The most celebrated and the best of these miscellanies is the one to which reference has already been made—*England's Helicon*, published 1600. It was planned by John Bodenham, and edited by an anonymous "A. B." One or other, or both of these men must have possessed a very fine poetic taste, for the very best of all the Elizabethan lyrics known to us are included in it. All the plays, romances, sonnet-sequences, song-books and miscellanies of the period must have been ransacked, and treasures from these placed side by side with hitherto unpublished poems. Twenty-seven poets, living and dead, are represented. In the list of these are to be found the well-known names of Shakespeare, Spenser, Sidney, Surrey, Drayton, Raleigh, Greene, Lodge and Peele, with those of lesser poets such as Edmund Bolton, Nicholas Breton, Richard Barnefield, Sir Edward Dyer, Henry Constable, and John Wootton.

Shakespeare is represented only by the song from *Love's Labour's Lost, On a day* (*alack, the day*). The ode, *As it fell upon a day*, is ascribed to him but has since been proved to be the work of Richard Barnefield. There are three poems by Spenser, one being the beautiful elegy on Sir Philip Sidney, *Colin Clout's Mournful Ditty for the Death of Astrophel*. The other two are taken from the *Shepheard's Calendar*. One of these is called *Hobbinol's Ditty in Praise of Eliza*, and is an excellent example of the extravagant flattery that the fashion of the day obliged the courtly poets to pay to the Queen.

> Tell me, have ye beheld her angel's face,
> Like Phœbe fair!
> Her heavenly behaviour, her princely grace
> Can well compare;

The red rose medled[1] and the white yfere,[2]
In either cheek depeincted lively cheer.
Her modest eye,
Her majesty,
Where have you seen the like but there ?

I saw Phœbus thrust out his golden head
On her to gaze :
But when he saw how broad her beams did spread
It did him maze.
He blush'd to see another sun below,
He durst again his fiery face outshow ;
Let him if he dare
His brightness compare,
With hers to have the overthrow.

There are several poems by Sidney, including his *Dirge*, said to have been written at the time when its author first heard of the marriage of Penelope Devereux to Lord Rich :

Ring out your bells, let mourning shews be spread ;
For Love is dead :
All love is dead, infected
With plague of deep disdain :
Worth, as nought worth, rejected,
And Faith fair scorn doth gain.
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female frenzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us !

Many of the poems take the conventional pastoral form, and the writer speaks of himself as a shepherd and of his lady as a shepherdess. There is, necessarily, a certain artificiality about this pastoral imagery, but it gave an opportunity for some fresh and beautiful country lyrics.

Phylida was a fayer mayde,
And fresh as any flowre,

Surrey had sung, in the days of Henry VIII, and the Elizabethans took up his note :

Come live with me, and be my love ;
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods or steepy mountain yields.

[1] Mixed. [2] Companions.

So Marlowe's "Passionate Shepherd" entreated his love, and Raleigh replied for the nymph:

> If all the world and love were young,
> And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
> These pretty pleasures might me move
> To live with thee and be thy love.

Michael Drayton, who, like his friend Shakespeare, was a native of Warwickshire, was a great writer of pastorals. His *Shepherd's Daffodil* is one of the freshest and daintiest of its class:

> Gorbo, as thou cam'st this way
> By yonder little hill,
> Or as thou through the fields didst stray,
> Saw'st thou my daffodil?
>
> She's in a frock of Lincoln-green,
> The colour maids delight;
> And never hath her beauty seen
> But through a veil of white,
>
> Than roses richer to behold
> That dress up lovers' bowers;
> The pansy and the marigold
> Are Phœbus' paramours.

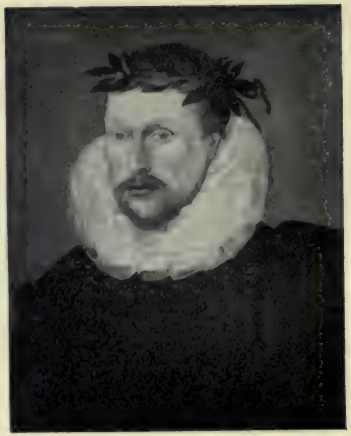
The poems of *England's Helicon* show the greatest variety in form. Some are written in the old 'poulter's measure,' so called because it was said to resemble the jog-trot of a farmer carrying his goods to market. Shakespeare ridicules it in his *As You Like It.* "I'll rhyme you so eight years together, dinners and suppers and sleeping hours excepted," says Touchstone, "it is the right butter-woman's rank to market"; and he goes on to give proof of his ability:

> If a hart do lack a hind,
> Let him seek out Rosalind.
> If the cat will after kind,
> So be sure will Rosalind.

But the later Elizabethans had learnt how to transform this 'jog-trot' measure into something much more smooth and flowing, and some most successful examples are to be found in

Sir Walter Raleigh
Zuccharo
Photo. Mansell & Co.

The Earl of Surrey
Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.



Michael Drayton
Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

England's Helicon. Richard Barnefield used it for the beautiful 'Ode' which has already been mentioned.

As it fell upon a day,
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a grove of myrtles made,
Beasts did leap and birds did spring;
Everything did banish moan
Save the nightingale alone.
She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
Leaned her breast up-till a thorn
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty
That to hear it was great pity.

The larger number of the poems, however, illustrate the tendency of the time to invent new, varied, and sometimes almost fantastic measures. Lodge, who is one of the sweetest and most tuneful of the Elizabethan singers, shows a mastery over a wide range of metres. His charming song *To Phyllis the Fair Shepherdess* is founded upon the 'poulter's measure.'

My Phyllis hath the morning Sun,
At first to look upon her;
And Phyllis hath morn-waking birds,
Her rising still to honour.

But in some of his songs he goes very far from this. For example:

Phœbe sat,
Sweet she sat,
Sweet sat Phœbe when I saw her.
White her brow,
Coy her eye,
Brow and eye how much you please me!

Words I span,
Sighs I sent,
Sighs and words could never draw her.
O my love!
Thou art lost,
Since no sight could ever ease thee.

Other less known writers show the same tendency. A little poem, signed "W. H.," runs thus:

How shall I her pretty tread
Express
When she doth walk?
Scarce she does the primrose head
Depress,

Or tender stalk
Of blue vein'd violets
Whereon her foot she sets,
Virtuous she is for we find
In body fair a beauteous mind.

The form of the poem is often decided by the fact that it is written for the purpose of being set to music. Sometimes, as in the case of Thomas Campion, the poet and the musician are united in one person, and so words and air take shape together. Elizabethan composers used two quite distinct musical forms—the madrigal and the ayre. The madrigal was one unbroken piece of music, forming a complete whole without division or repetition. The corresponding lyric form is also called a madrigal, and follows the music.

Hark, jolly shepherds,
Hark, yon lusty ringing,
How cheerfully the bells dance
The whilst the lads are springing!
Go we then, why sit we here delaying?
And all yond merry, wanton lasses playing?
How gaily Flora leads it,
And sweetly treads it,
The woods and groves they ring,
Lovely resounding,
With echoes rebounding.

The ayre was written for poems which were divided into stanzas, and was repeated for each stanza; *e.g.*:

Tune on my pipe the praises of my love,
Love fair and bright;
Till earth with sound, and airy heavens above
Heaven's Jove's delight,
With Daphnis' praise.

To pleasant Tempe groves and plains about,
Plains shepherds' pride,
Resounding echoes of her praise ring out,
Ring far and wide
My Daphnis' praise.

It is impossible here to give any account of all the beautiful poems which this Elizabethan anthology contains. Almost every one is a gem. Most of the quotations in this chapter have been, designedly, taken from some of the least-known

poems in the collection, but we will finish with the one that is perhaps the best known of them all—Robert Greene's lovely *Content*:

Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown:
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbours quiet rest;
The cottage that affords no pride nor care;
The mean that 'grees with country music best;
The sweet consort of mirth and music's fare;
Obscurèd life sets down a type of bliss,
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

CHAPTER XX

HAKLUYT'S VOYAGES

RICHARD HAKLUYT was one of those supremely fortunate persons who go through life with a great absorbing purpose set clear and plain before them. While he was yet a boy the passion was kindled within him which led him on through years of hardships, and made his toil a delight. He tells us himself, just how it happened. "I do remember," he says, "that being a youth and one of her Majesty's scholars at Westminster, that fruitful nurserie, it was my hap to visit the chamber of Mr. Richard Hakluyt my Cosin, a Gentleman of the Middle Temple, at a time when I found lying open upon his boord certeine bookes of Cosmographie, with an Universalle Mappe. He seeing me somewhat curious in the view thereof began to instruct my ignorance by showing me the division of the earth into three partes after the olde account, and then according to the latter and better distribution more; he pointed with his wand to all the knowen Seas, Gulfs, Bayes, Straights, Capes, Rivers, Empires, Kingdoms, Dukedoms and Territories of ech part, with declaration also of their special commodities and particular wants, which by the benefit of traffike and entercourse of merchants are plentifully supplied. From the map he brought me to the Bible, and turning to the 107th Psalme directed me to the 23rd and 24th verses, where I read that 'they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.' Which words of the Prophet together with my cousin's discourse (things of high and rare delight to my young nature) tooke in me so deepe an impression, that I

constantly resolved, if ever I were preferred to the University, where better time and more convenient place might be ministered for these studies, I would, by God's assistance, prosecute that knowledge and kind of literature the doores whereof (after a sort) were so happily opened before me."

Hakluyt was fortunate, too, in the age in which he lived. There never was such an age for the student of 'Cosmographie' and for the man who took "a high and rare delight" in learning of the "wonders in the deep." It was nearly a hundred years since Columbus had sailed on that memorable voyage which opened to us a new world, and his example, and the great "fame and report" that he gained, lit in other hearts "a great flame of desire to attempt some notable thing." So said Sebastian Cabot, a Venetian merchant, who, in 1497, sailed from Bristol and discovered the coast of Labrador; and after him came many others, Portuguese and Spaniards and Italians, and, last of all, English. The English age of exploration did not begin until half-way through the sixteenth century. But though late in the field, they did not long lag behind. Hugh Willoughby, Richard Chancellor, John Hawkins, Humphrey Gilbert, Walter Raleigh, Francis Drake, Martin Frobisher, John Davys—these all stand in the front rank of sixteenth-century explorers.

For the stay-at-homes as well as for the travellers, these voyages of exploration opened out new worlds of beauty and wonder. The returned sailors filled every port in the country with marvellous stories of their adventures, and from the ports the stories travelled inland. A traveller's yarn, as strange as any that Sir John Mandeville had offered his readers, might be heard in almost every place where a few men were gathered together—in the market, the tavern, the barber's shop, the open street. And it was not only of the marvels of the new lands that the seamen spoke. They had nobler stories to tell of perils bravely met and difficulties overcome. The spirit of Englishmen rose high as the brave tales went round, and men heard

> Daily how through hardy enterprise
> Many great Regions are discovered.

For a long time the written records of the voyages were very imperfect and scanty. Captains kept their logs, and sometimes on their return home published a narrative compiled from these; or sometimes a member of an expedition wrote a more or less detailed, independent personal narrative. John Hawkins wrote *A True Declaration of the Troublesome voyage of Mr. John Hawkins to the parts of Guinea and the West Indies in the years of our Lord,* 1567 *and* 1568, and in 1570 Sir Humphrey Gilbert wrote his *Discourse of a Discoverie for a new passage to Cataia.* Frobisher and Richard Hawkins also published some account of their voyages. All these attracted much attention, and throughout the country men were eagerly asking for more of these fascinating and heart-stirring stories. But many voyages remained entirely unrecorded, and much splendid material for epic narrative was in danger of being lost.

It seems strange when we think of the number of men who were at this time writing poetry in England, that nobody seized upon one of these great heroic stories and made it the basis of an epic poem. To write a lyric was, in those golden days, the ordinary accomplishment of a gentleman, to write a play was in the day's work of a literary hack. But no one, it seems, thought of writing an epic, though the material lay so ready to hand. For some unexplained reason such work did not suit the genius of the age. It responded freely and fully to the stimulus which came from this tremendous expansion of natural activity; the literature of the day is full of the adventures of the voyagers, it breathes the spirit of the sea and sings triumphantly of the glories of the new lands. But for that full commendation, which should suffice to pass their names down to posterity, the great Elizabethan seamen waited for Richard Hakluyt.

Hakluyt was not a sailor, and his home was in the inland county of Herefordshire. He came of a learned stock, and received a scholarly education to fit him for his destined place as a clergyman of the English Church. He does not seem ever to have travelled farther than Paris. Yet he will always be closely associated with great deeds done upon the

high seas, and wonderful adventures in distant lands. The fascination which these things had for him kept him faithful all his life long to the purpose which he had formed in his boyish days. When he went from Westminster School to Christ Church, Oxford, he followed, with a single mind, the path he had marked out for himself. He learnt six languages in order that he might be able to read all the narratives of voyages that he could possibly obtain. He studied geography, as far as it was then known; more especially he paid attention to the construction of maps. He learned the art of navigation, with the use of the navigator's instruments. When he left the University he lectured on these subjects, probably to merchants and shipmen of the Port of London, "to the singular pleasure and general contentment of his audience."

By this time he had begun to collect the scattered narratives of the earlier voyagers, and to attempt, as he said, "to incorporate into one body the torn and scattered limbs of our ancient and late navigations by sea." Of some voyages no written account existed. Hakluyt set himself diligently to work to collect such facts as might enable him to supply the omission. Every possible source of information—official documents, letters, chance references in literature, the stories current in the common gossip of the day—was dealt with in able and painstaking fashion. Once Hakluyt rode two hundred miles for an interview with the last survivor of Master Hoare's expedition to America, 1536. Some facts concerning the memorable and unrecorded voyages of Sebastian Cabot he gathered from an account given to "Certaine Gentlemen of Venice" by the Pope's Legate in Spain, who had it from Cabot himself, in his old age. "What restless nights, what painful days, what heat, what cold, I have endured; how many long and chargeable journeys I have travelled; how many famous libraries I have searched into; what variety of ancient and modern writers I have perused; what a number of old records, patents, privileges, letters, etc., I have redeemed from obscurity and perishing; into how manifold acquaintance I have entered; what expenses I have not spared."

In 1582 Hakluyt published *Divers Voyages touching the Discoverie of America,* which he dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney. From 1583 to 1588 he was living in Paris, as chaplain to the English embassy. Here the stories which he heard of foreign enterprise made him still more eager to continue his work, and "to wade still further and further in the sweet studie of the historie of cosmographie." In 1590 he became Rector of Wetheringsett in Suffolk, and married in 1594. In 1589 his great work, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation, made by sea or over land to the most remote and farthest distant quarters of the earth at any time within the compasse of these fifteen hundred yeares,* was published.

This book, as Froude has said, "may be called the Prose Epic of the modern English nation. . . . We have no longer kings or princes for chief actors, to whom the heroism, like the dominion of the world had in time past been confined. But, as it was in the days of the Apostles, when a few poor fishermen from an obscure lake in Palestine assumed, under the Divine mission, the spiritual authority over mankind, so, in the days of our own Elizabeth, the seamen from the banks of the Thames and the Avon, the Plym and the Dart, self-taught and self-directed, with no impulse but what was beating in their own royal hearts, went out across the unknown seas fighting, discovering, colonizing, and graved out the channels, paving them at last with their bones, through which the commerce and enterprise of England have flowed out over all the world. We can conceive nothing, not the songs of Homer himself, which would be read among us with more enthusiastic interest than these plain massive tales."

Charles Kingsley, who founded his great book *Westward Ho!* on Hakluyt's *Voyages,* speaks of the sailor heroes with the same enthusiasm. "I have been living in those Elizabethan books," he says, "among such grand, beautiful, silent men, that I am learning to be sure of what I all along suspected, that I am a poor, queasy, hysterical, half-baked sort of fellow, so that I am by no means hopeful about my book, which seems

to me only half as good as I could have written, and only one-hundredth part as good as ought to be written on the matter." It is, indeed, a great and notable company to which Hakluyt introduces us. There is Sebastian Cabot, "a very gentle person," who laid down wise laws for his "companie of Marchants adventurers," directing that all the crew shall be "so knit and accorded in unitie, love, conformitie, and obedience in everie degree on all sides, that no dissention, variance or contention may rise or spring betwixt them and the mariners of this companie to the damage or hindrance of the voyage." There is Martin Frobisher, so bent upon his great enterprise of discovering the North-West Passage to India that "he determined and resolved with himself to go make full proof thereof, and to accomplish or bring true certificate of the truth, or else never to return again; knowing this to be the only thing of the world that was left yet undone, whereby a notable mind might be made famous and fortunate." There is Sir Richard Hawkins, who sailed in his ship *Repentance*, which his mother had named because, she said, "repentance was the safest ship we could sail in to purchase the haven of heaven." There is Francis Drake, full of "invincible courage and industry," climbing a tree in Panama, so that two oceans lay stretched beneath his gaze, and vowing that he would sail a ship into the unknown Pacific; crawling out upon the cliffs of Terra Del Fuego, and leaning his head over the southernmost angle of the world; "scoring a furrow round the globe with his keel," and receiving the homage of the barbarians of the antipodes in the name of the Virgin Mary; "singeing the King of Spain's beard" in that "strange and happy enterprise" in which he "burnt, sunk or brought away" thirty ships from the harbour of Santa Cruz, including "one new ship of extraordinary hugeness, being in burden about 1200 tons, belonging to the Marquis of Santa Cruz, at that instant high admiral of Spain," which exploit "bred such a corrosive in the heart of the marquis, that he never enjoyed good day after." There is Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who went down in his little ship the *Squirrel*, dying in a fashion "well beseeming

a soldier resolute in Jesus Christ," and whose great words written in his *Discourse* sum up the grand and simple creed by which these brave mariners directed their lives: "Never, therefore, mislike with me for taking in hand any laudable and honest enterprise, for if through pleasure or idleness we purchase shame, the pleasure vanisheth, but the shame abideth for ever. Give me leave, therefore, without offence, always to live and die in this mind: that he is not worthy to live at all that, for fear or danger of death, shunneth his country's service and his own honour, seeing that death is inevitable and the fame of virtue immortal."

It is to Richard Hakluyt that we owe our intimate knowledge of all these great heroes, and of many more, not less than they. Their histories had long lain "miserably scattered in mustie corners, and retchlessly hidden in mistie darknesse, and were very like for the greatest part to have been buried in perpetuall oblivion." Hakluyt recovered them for us, and in so doing gained for himself an honoured place in the history of English literature.

CHAPTER XXI

ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY

WE have seen how, throughout the reign of Elizabeth the spirit of the Renaissance had mounted ever higher and higher, and had produced a literature such as has hardly been equalled during all the ages of the world's history. But underneath all the riot of wit and glory of imagination, the sober, serious spirit of the Englishman still persisted. There were still many men in the country to whom religion was the great central fact of life. While the first notes were rising from the great company of singers whose chorus was to fill the land with music, Cranmer, with his band of helpers was perfecting that glory of the English Church, the Book of Common Prayer; while Marlowe was thrilling the crowds that flocked to the Belsavage Playhouse with his riotous *Tamburlaine* or his terrible *Faust*, Englishmen who were exiles for the faith were watching with envious admiration the godly, strictly ordered community which Calvin had established in Geneva; and in the same year that Shakespeare's mirthful fairy play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, was first produced, Richard Hooker from his quiet country parsonage at Bishopsbourne sent out the first part of his great theological work, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.

The title is not a very attractive one, nor is the 'judicious Hooker' at first sight a very attractive personality, especially when he is placed beside the great and gallant figures which crowd that glorious age. "What went they out to see," says his biographer, Izaak Walton, referring to the visitors whom Hooker's fame attracted to his quiet country home, "A man clothed in purple and fine linen? No, indeed; but an obscure,

harmless man; a man in poor clothes, his loins usually girt in a coarse gown, or canonical coat; of a mean stature, and stooping, and yet more lowly in the thoughts of his soul; his body worn out, not with age, but study and holy mortifications; his face full of heat pimples, begot by his unactivity and sedentary life. . . . God and nature blessed him with so blessed a bashfulness, that as in his younger days his pupils might easily look him out of countenance; so neither then, nor in his age, did he ever willingly look any man in the face: and was of so mild and humble a nature, that his poor parish clerk and he did never talk but with both their hats on, or both off, at the same time: and to this may be added, that though he was not purblind, yet he was short or weak-sighted; and where he fixed his eyes at the beginning of his sermon, there they continued till it was ended."

Yet, if a great work, nobly conceived and finely executed, can dignify its author there is a very real grandeur in the insignificant figure thus described, and Richard Hooker deserves to be remembered among those other 'men of Devon' who shed glory upon their native county in the reign of the great Queen. He was born at Heavytree, near Exeter, March 1554, and was educated at the Exeter High School. He was, even as a boy, slow, grave, and earnest in manner, of a fine modesty, and with a keen intellectual curiosity united to a serene quietness of temper. Everywhere these qualities gained him friends. It was under the patronage of the great Bishop Jewel—himself a Devonshire man—that he entered Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1568, and he remained there, first as student, and then as Fellow, until 1584, when he married. His wife is credited with shrewishness of temper, and several of Hooker's friends have represented him as a most pitiably henpecked and oppressed husband. But it is probable that in this there has been considerable exaggeration. For a year after his marriage Hooker held a small living in Buckinghamshire. Here he was visited by two of his pupils, Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer. They found him with the *Odes of Horace* in his hand, tending the sheep, while the servant was away at

dinner. Being released from this occupation, Hooker engaged in eager conversation with his visitors, but was soon called away to rock the cradle of his baby daughter, Joan. The two young men, wrathful and indignant, left the house early the next morning. To an unprejudiced judgment, however, Hooker's case does not seem to have been such a very terrible one. To tend sheep is an occupation neither harmful nor degrading, and as for rocking the cradle, why, as Mr. Stopford Brooke says, "Richard could not have had a sweeter employment; he was precisely in the place assigned to him in the divine order of the universe." He himself, as far as we can tell, never showed by his words or his actions any feeling toward his wife, save respect and affection, and he proved his confidence in her by making her the sole executrix of his will.

In 1585 Hooker was appointed Master of the Temple, where he soon became famous as a preacher who upheld with power and ability the established order of the English Church. But he was not nearly as happy here as he had been in his quiet home in Buckinghamshire. It was Hooker's duty to preach the morning sermon. In the afternoon his place was taken by Mr. Walter Travers, a man of upright character, and great zeal, but a strong upholder of the Presbyterian form of church government. Travers was a very popular preacher, and people flocked in crowds to the Temple to hear his heated attacks on the bishops of the Church. So, as witty, gossiping Thomas Fuller tells us, in his *Worthies of England*, written some fifty years after, "The pulpit of the Temple spoke pure Canterbury in the morning and Geneva in the afternoon. At the building of Solomon's temple neither hammer nor axe nor tool of iron was heard therein. Whereas, alas! in this Temple, not only much knocking was heard, but (which was the worst) the nails and pins which one master-builder drave in were driven out by the other."

Such a state of things was terribly distressing to poor Hooker. He could not live amid bitterness and strife. The authorities were on his side, and Archbishop Whitgift prohibited Travers from preaching on the ground that his ordina-

tion was irregular. But even this did not free Hooker from his difficulties. Travers carried on the war in print, and his unwilling adversary was forced to reply. Utterly weary of it all, Hooker addressed an almost piteous petition to the Archbishop. "My Lord, when I lost the freedom of my cell, which was my college, yet I found some degree of it in my quiet country parsonage; but I am weary of the noise and oppositions of this place, and, indeed, God and nature did not intend me for contentions, but for study and quietness." He goes on to speak with modesty, yet with a due sense of its importance, of the work on which he is engaged, and his desire to write a book that shall be worthy of his great subject. "I shall never be able to do this, but where I may study and pray for God's blessing on my endeavours, and keep myself in peace and privacy, and behold God's blessing spring out of my mother earth, and eat my own bread without opposition."

The Archbishop listened to Hooker's plea, and recognized its justice. In 1591 the living of Boscum, near Salisbury, was given to him. Here in 'peace and privacy' he laboured with good heart at his great work, and in 1594 the first four books of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* were published. "All things written in this booke," Hooker wrote in the Preface, "I humbly and meekly submit to the censure of the grave and reverend Prelates within this land, to the judgment of learned men, and the sober consideration of all others. Wherein I may haply erre as others before me have done, but an heretike by the help of Almighty God I will never be."

Hooker's book attempts to set forward, clearly and in order, the laws on which the English Church, as established by Elizabeth, was founded; and, in doing so, to claim and gain for it the allegiance of all Englishmen, including those who looked yearningly after the ancient glories of the Church of Rome, and those who were attracted by the strict moral code of the Puritans. This was not an easy matter, for the lines of the settlement had been decided by State policy rather than by any consideration of what was theoretically perfect. There had been so much compromise, so many attempts to

bring in men of all shades of opinion that the Church had really no firm basis of definite law on which to stand. Her constitution was chaotic and uncertain. Hooker rendered to her the great service of deducing her laws from her practice, and setting these out clearly, persuasively and attractively.

The task suited both his temperament and his gifts. He was warmly attached to the Church of England, and a notable member of the small band which was already, in these early days, gathering round her in loyal devotion. He loved above all things order and peace. "What are you thinking of," his friend, Dr. Saravia, asked him, as he lay in bed during his last illness. "I was meditating," replied Hooker, "on the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven; and oh, that it might be so on earth!" This was his aspiration always—peace on earth; and at first sight it may seem strange that a man of such a temperament should find his life-work in a book controversial in its character. But it is to this love of peace that his book owes much of its fine and rare quality. Hooker was, to use his own words, one of those who do "not so much incline to that severity which delighteth to reprove the least it seeth amiss, as to that charity which is unwilling to behold anything that duty bindeth it to reprove." He does not address those who are attacking the position he has undertaken to defend as if they were enemies who must be smitten down, overthrown, exterminated. Rather he holds out a hand to them, and says, "Come with me. You do not know how strong and rich and fair is the city you would destroy. Let me show you her bulwarks, her treasures, the vastness of her domains which can shelter all mankind, the beneficence of her government which takes count of each unit in the throng. When you have seen all this the desire of attacking her will pass from you, and you will lead in the little colony which has established itself outside her walls to be cherished under the wise and tender care of this great Mother of Men."

The contrast between Hooker's calm conciliatory tone and the heated and abusive railing commonly used in the religious

controversies of the day helps to show how great a book the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* is. It lifted the whole matter to a higher plane; it gave dignity to what had been mere bitterness and squabbling.

The book is a literary masterpiece—the first great English prose classic. Its style is high and serene. Sentence follows sentence in majestic order, each heavy with meaning but bare of ornament. The very quietness of the style is in itself impressive. Hooker, as it were, never raises his voice, uses no repetitions, does not stamp his foot, nod his head or wave his arms. He stands, as we are told he did when he preached from visible pulpits, quite still, perhaps even a trifle too still. But by the exquisite modulations of his voice and the fine quality of its tone he gains effects more striking than any that the ordinary rhetorical devices can produce. We will take, as an example, the passage in which he defines a law:

"All things that are have some operation not violent or casual. Neither doth anything ever begin to exercise the same, without some fore-conceived end for which it worketh. And the end which it worketh for is not obtained, unless the work be also fit to obtain it by. For unto every end every operation will not serve. That which doth assign unto each thing the kind, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working, that we term a Law."

Or another beautiful passage on the same subject:

"Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage; the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power: both Angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

In 1595 a better living, that of Bishopsbourne in Kent, was given to him. Here he worked diligently at the completion of his book, interrupted only by visits from scholars eager to see

Bishopsbourne Church

Photo. Frith & Co

the man whose rare learning was famous throughout England; and here his gentle, pious, studious life drew quietly toward its end. He died November 2, 1600. The fifth book of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* had been published in 1597; the sixth and eighth were published after his death, in 1648, the seventh in 1662.

In the chancel of the beautiful church of Bishopsbourne a portrait bust of Richard Hooker was placed, shortly after his death. "It is," wrote Dean Stanley, "of the same style and form as the nearly contemporary one of Shakespeare, in the church of Stratford-on-Avon. Unlike that more famous monument this has the good fortune to have retained the colour without whitewash. . . . It represents Hooker in his college cap, his hair black, without a tinge of grey, his forehead high and broad and overhanging, lively piercing eyes, deep set beneath it, his cheeks ruddy, and a powerful mouth." This is probably a portrait of Hooker in his early manhood, the learned scholar who was the pride of his University. But we like better to think of him as Izaak Walton has shown him to us, the Hooker of later years, sitting in "peace and privacy," raising his noble memorial to the Church he loved.

From the Death of Elizabeth to the Restoration

THE first sixty years of the seventeenth century represent an interval between two great literary periods, and the writings of the time possess some of the characteristics of each of these. During the reign of James I the Renaissance spirit, though enfeebled, was still operative; only it worked with greater sobriety and restraint, and through man's intellectual rather than through his imaginative powers. So we get the brilliant philosophical and scientific works of Francis Bacon, and the dramas of Ben Jonson somewhat overweighted with their classical learning.

All through the reign the general interest in religious questions was deepening, and soon these began to absorb the attention of the finest intellects of the age. In 1625, when Charles I succeeded his father, Puritanism had become so powerful a force in the country that it was clear it must, sooner or later, have a large influence upon the national literature. Anglicanism, which, since the days of Elizabeth's Church Settlement, had been striving to establish itself, had been greatly advanced by Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity; and the new king's strong attachment to the national Church raised it to a still higher position. The poems of Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, and Sandys, and in a lesser degree those of Robert Herrick, show how effectively Anglicanism was working as a literary force.

There was also a group of Court poets, led by Lovelace and Suckling. These produced a quantity of pleasant and tuneful verse that had much of the careless grace of the Elizabethan lyrics, but little of their freshness and spontaneity.

Most of these singers were silenced at the breaking out of tl great Civil War which, by diverting the energies of the natio operated against the production of any really great work.

The supremacy of the Puritans closed the theatres, and put a stop to dramatic production. It turned Milton fro a poet into a writer of violent political pamphlets; it dro Cowley and Waller, poets of high repute in their day, in exile. So that as we approach the end of this period, it seen almost as if English literature is threatened with extinction.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING

"I HAVE taken all knowledge to be my province." Even if we did not know who it was that said these words we should guess that he belonged to the age in which such large and splendid utterances were common; the age when Spenser dedicated the *Faerie Queene* to Elizabeth "to live with the eternity of her fame," and when Shakespeare said of the *Sonnets* that he addressed to the Earl of Southampton,—

> So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
> So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

It was not boastfulness or vainglory that led the men of the Elizabethan age to make these large claims, but rather a high sense of the glory and dignity which belonged to the work they had set themselves to do; and most notably was this the case with Francis Bacon. When, in a letter to his kinsman, Lord Burghley, he made the proud claim, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province," he added, "This is so fixed in my mind as it cannot be moved." How true were his words his whole life showed. It was not a stainless life, "a composition of the best and honourablest things," such as Milton said the life of a great writer ought to be. Bacon was bent upon obtaining money and power and position—not for any ignoble end, but that he might have leisure and opportunity to study and to write. But his heart was too cold, his conception of human nature too low, and his moral fibre too weak for this desire to be to him the wholesome incentive that it was to Shakespeare. Instead, it made him time-serving and mean and faithless—a man who knew the right, but did the wrong. Yet, in spite of this, the figure of Francis Bacon, as history

shows it to us, is not without nobility, and even grandeur. The breadth and glory of his intellectual visions, the loyalty with which he followed them, the hard and painful labour that he gave to their fulfilment, compel admiration. His place among the great Elizabethans is assured.

Strictly speaking, however, Bacon, as a writer, is not an Elizabethan. He was born in 1561, or to quote his own graceful answer to the Queen when she asked his age, he was "two years younger than Her Majesty's happy reign." In the letter to Lord Burleigh, to which reference has already been made, he said, "I wax now somewhat ancient; one and thirty years is a great deal of sand in the hour glass," and it was not until fourteen years later, when James I had been two years on the throne, that he published the first instalment of his great work. But its plan had been sketched when he was a young law student at Gray's Inn, in the days before the Armada, and, moreover, in tone and spirit Bacon is entirely Elizabethan. He has the largeness of aim and breadth of conception, the daring delight in adventuring into regions new and unexplored, which characterized the generation that, as he wrote, was rapidly passing away.

In a letter belonging to the last year of his life he looks back toward this early period. "It is now forty years," he says, "since I put together a youthful essay on these matters, which, with vast confidence I called by the high-sounding title *The Greatest Birth of Time.*" This was his earliest effort toward the accomplishment of the great purpose which had dominated his life and "in that purpose my mind never waxed old, in that long interval of time it never cooled." He designed to write a great work, which was to be called the *Magna Instauratio* or *Great Instauration.* "It is to be divided," says Bacon's biographer, Mr. Ellis, "into six portions, of which the first is to contain a general survey of the present state of knowledge. In the second men are to be taught how to use their understanding aright in the investigation of nature. In the third, all the phenomena of the universe are to be stored up as in a treasure-house, as the materials on which the new

Sir Francis Bacon 198

Paul van Somer

Photo. Emery Walker Ltd

method is to be employed. In the fourth, examples are to be given of its operation and of the results to which it leads. The fifth is to contain what Bacon had accomplished in natural philosophy *without* the aid of his own method. It is therefore less important than the rest, and Bacon declares that he will not bind himself to the conclusions which it contains. Moreover, its value will altogether cease when the sixth part can be completed, wherein will be set forth the new philosophy—the results of the application of the new method to all the phenomena of the universe. But to complete this, the last part of the *Instauratio*, Bacon does not hope."

Only a very small part of this plan was, in fact, completed. Bacon's time was mainly taken up with affairs of State, and with the duties of the various offices which at different times he held. But amidst all the press of business he managed to steal some hours for the work he loved; and there were intervals when he was out of favour or out of office. Such an interval came in 1605 when, having finished his work as a Commissioner for the Union of England and Scotland in December 1604, he had no further public work to occupy him until Parliament met in November 1605. He used this time to finish the first part of his great work, the *Two Books of the Advancement of Learning*. This, contrary to his usual custom, he wrote in English. Most of his learned works were written in Latin, and such as were not—the *Essays*, the *History of Henry VII* and the *Advancement*—he was careful to cause to be translated into the 'general language' as soon as might be. "For these modern languages," he wrote to one of his correspondents, "will at one time or another play the bankrupt with books, and since I have lost much time with this age, I would be glad if God would give me leave to recover it with posterity"; and when the *Advancement* was afterwards translated into Latin he sent a copy of it to Prince Charles, with the words, "It is a book that will live, and be a citizen of the world, as English books are not."

Bacon hurried over the last stages of the *Advancement* because

he wished to bring it, as soon as possible, to the notice of James I. The King had the reputation of being a scholar, and would, Bacon thought, be ready to give sympathy and encouragement to the great scheme when it was set before him. The first book, therefore, opens with an address to the King, in which flattery, as open and extravagant as that which the poets of the previous reign addressed to Elizabeth, is mixed with the noble and sincere expression of the scholar's devotion to learning. "Leaving aside the other parts of your virtue and fortune," he says, "I have been touched, yea, and possessed with an extreme wonder at those your virtues and faculties, which the Philosophers call intellectual; the largeness of your capacity, the faithfulness of your memory, the swiftness of your apprehension, the penetration of your judgment, and the facility and order of your elocution." Then after a great deal more flattery, in which the King's intellectual qualities are extolled, Bacon goes on to say that such a ruler deserves, "in some solid work a fixed memorial and immortal monument." "Therefore I did conclude with myself, that I could not make unto your Majesty a better oblation than of some treatise tending to that end, whereof the sum will consist of these two parts; the former, concerning the excellency of learning and knowledge, and the excellency of the merit and true glory in the augmentation and propagation thereof: the latter, what the particular acts and works are, which have been embraced and undertaken for the advancement of learning; and again, what defects and undervalues I find in such particular acts: to the end that though I cannot positively or affirmatively advise your Majesty, or propound unto you framed particulars, yet I may excite your princely cogitations to visit the excellent treasure of your own mind, and thence to extract particulars for this purpose, agreeable to your magnanimity and wisdom."

The plan thus set down Bacon faithfully followed out in detail; and he produced a book which is not only memorable in the history of science, but has a still more important place in the history of English prose The style is not the style of

Hooker, with grand, rolling finished periods and majestic harmonies. The language is completely dominated by the subject and the arrangement under headings and sub-headings interferes with the regular flow of the whole. But, in spite of these things, the *Advancement* is a noble piece of English prose. "It is a book," says Dean Church, "which we can never open without coming on some noble interpretation of the realities of nature or the mind; some unexpected discovery of that quick and keen eye which arrests us by its truth; some felicitous and unthought-of illustration, yet so natural as almost to be doomed to become a commonplace; some bright touch of his incorrigible imaginativeness, ever ready to force itself in amid the driest details of his argument."

Among the manuscripts of Bacon that have been preserved to our own time are some which contain notes and jottings for future use, and these are of extreme interest as illustrating the manner in which he worked. He wrote down everything that he thought might be useful in the way of illustration or of ornament. Proverbs, anecdotes, jokes, fragments of dialogue, witty or pointed remarks, turns of speech which supply a telling way of opening or closing a paragraph—all these are recorded. There are sets of quotations bearing on special subjects, observations on particular faults or virtues, maxims bearing upon a branch of conduct or a department of business—all grouped together. Many of these materials are used over and over again in his published works. In the *Advancement* he uses as part of his argument to prove the high esteem in which learning should be held an illustration to which he returned time after time in later works, "*The Glory of God,*" he quotes, "*is to conceal a thing, but the glory of the king is to find it out;* as if, according to the innocent play of children, the Divine Majesty took delight to hide his works to the end to have them found out; and as if kings could not obtain a greater honour than to be God's playfellows in that game." But this repetition is not due to any poverty of invention or narrowness of range. On the contrary, an examination of the comparisons and metaphors used in the two books of the *Advancement* reveals

a delightful variety and originality. "Behaviour," he says, "seemeth to me as a garment of the mind, and to have the conditions of a garment. For it ought to be made in fashion; it ought not to be too curious; it ought to be shaped so as to set forth any good making of the mind and hide any deformity; and above all, it ought not to be too strait or restrained for exercise or motion." He defends himself against those who would decry learning in that it gives a knowledge of evil as well as of good by reference to the fable of the basilisk. "For as the fable goeth of the basilisk, that if he see you first, you die for it; but if you see him first, he dieth: so is it with deceits and evil arts; which if they be first espied they leese their life; but if they prevent, they endanger." He illustrates the growth of a man in virtue in the following beautiful passage: "For if these two things be supposed that a man set before him honest and good ends, and again, that he be resolute, constant and true unto them; it will follow that he shall mould himself into all virtue at once. And this is indeed like the work of nature; whereas the other course is like the work of the hand. For as when a carver makes an image, he shapes only that part whereupon he worketh: as if he be upon the face, that part which shall be the body is but a rude stone still, till such times as he comes to it. But contrariwise when nature makes a flower or living creature she formeth rudiments of all the parts at one time. So in obtaining virtue by habit, while a man practiseth temperance, he doth not profit much to fortitude, nor the like: but when he dedicateth and applieth himself to good ends, look, what virtue soever the pursuit and passage toward those ends doth commend unto him, he is invested of a precedent disposition to conform himself thereunto. Which state of mind Aristotle doth excellently express himself that it ought not to be called virtuous, but divine."

The *Advancement* failed to kindle in King James the enthusiasm which Bacon had so confidently expected. James's learning was of the solid, conventional order, and his mind was shrewd rather than brilliant. He saw little that was attractive in the great prospect that Bacon opened out before

him, and he distrusted Bacon's splendid promises of glory to be gained by a king who would prove himself a true friend to learning. For the time Bacon's great literary venture remained unappreciated and almost unknown.

But he was not disheartened. The splendid courage and perseverance which had brought him so far on his way were unaffected by disappointment or neglect. He took up his work again, and gave to the production of his next book the leisure moments which he could gain through the following fifteen years. During these years he rose to high honour in his profession. In 1618 he became Lord Chancellor and Baron Verulam. In 1620 his *Novum Organum*, the second part of his great work was published.

In this book Bacon set forth in detail the great plan of which some indications had been given in the *Advancement*. It professed to expound a method by means of which man might learn the secrets of the material world—to be in fact, a key to all the sciences. The exact importance of this work in the history of science is a matter upon which critics are disagreed. It is generally allowed, however, that it falls far short of the claims that its author makes for it. As a practical guide to scientific investigation it is almost useless.

Yet Bacon is awarded, by almost universal consent, an honoured place among the pioneers of science, and from his work men date the beginning of the modern era. To him belongs the great merit of having set forth clearly and eloquently the truth that scientific research must depend upon patient, faithful observation of the phenomena of nature, that close examination and careful experiment must underlie all theories and build up all chains of reasoning. He saw how men had been led astray by their neglect of this simple rule, and he tried to bring them back to the only path by which they could arrive at truth. "For we copy the sin of our first parents while we suffer for it. They wished to be like God, but their posterity wish to be even greater. For we create worlds, we direct and domineer over nature, we will have it that all things *are* as in our folly we think they should be, not

as seems fittest to the Divine wisdom, or as they are found to be in fact; and I know not whether we more distort the facts of nature or of our own wits." He entreats men "to approach with humility and veneration to unroll the volume of Creation, to linger and meditate therein, and with minds washed clean from opinions to study it in purity and integrity. For this is that sound and language which 'went forth into all lands,' and did not incur the confusion of Babel; this should men study to be perfect in, and becoming again as little children condescend to take the alphabet of it into their hands, and spare no pains to search and unravel the interpretation thereof, but pursue it strenuously and persevere even unto death."

Less than six months after the *Novum Organum* was published came Bacon's fall. He was accused of corruption in his office of judge, was fined £40,000, and imprisoned in the Tower during the King's pleasure. The fine was remitted, and after two days' imprisonment Bacon was released. But his public career was over. How far he was guilty of the charges brought against him is a question which cannot here be discussed. His own confession shows that he was not entirely innocent. Five years of life remained to him, and he spent these in retirement, still working unweariedly and courageously on the great scheme which in his youth he had set before himself. He published his *De Augmentis*, which is the *Advancement* translated into Latin and much enlarged, his *History of Henry VII*, a complete edition of his *Essays*, and some further papers intended to form part of his great work. He died on April 9, 1626.

"For my name and memory," he said in his will, "I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages." The "next ages" have justified his implied confidence. They have given him an honoured place among scientists, and they have recognized his *Essays*, his *History of Henry VII*, and his *Advancement of Learning* as belonging to the great English classics.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ALCHEMIST

WHEN Shakespeare had been some twelve years in London, and had gained for himself a leading position among the actors and dramatists of his time, there was sent in one day to the managers of The Theatre, Shoreditch, a new play called *Every Man in His Humour*, by Ben Jonson. The author was not unknown, for although he was a young man of twenty-five years old, he had been living in London for some years, and had written several plays. *Every Man in His Humour* was, however, so different in its character from the comedies that then held the stage that the managers hesitated to accept it. The influence of Shakespeare, so says tradition, turned the scale, and the play was produced. Shakespeare acted in it, taking, we think, the part of Knowell. It had a great success, and raised Jonson above the crowd of needy playwrights struggling for public favour, to a place next below Shakespeare's.

But Jonson had not the wholesome happy temperament of the greater dramatist—the temperament that grows sweeter, kinder, and more genial in the sunshine of success. Nor had he Shakespeare's charm of manner and comeliness of person. He was vain, quarrelsome and obstinately set on his own opinions, brusque and rough in his intercourse with other men, of a clumsy and unwieldy figure and rugged features. These were qualities which became more quickly apparent than did his honesty of purpose, his manly firmness of character, his true generosity of soul. His hot temper involved him in constant disputes. A few months after the appearance of *Every Man in His Humour* he fought a duel with an actor, Gabriel

Spencer, whom he killed. He was imprisoned for a short time and only escaped further punishment by pleading his 'benefit of clergy.' A little later, when Jonson had strengthened his reputation by the production of another comedy, *Every Man Out of His Humour*, the envy of less successful playwrights and his own boastful arrogance brought on another quarrel. Dekker and Marston led the forces of the theatres against Jonson, and many hard words were spoken on either side. Shakespeare, when Robert Greene had made a spiteful attack upon him, had gone calmly on his way and said nothing. But such a course was impossible to the irritable temper of Ben Jonson, and his two next plays, *Cynthia's Revels* and *The Poetaster* remain to show with what vigour he struck back when he was attacked.

Jonson next tried his hand at tragedy, and in 1603 his play of *Sejanus* was produced by the Lord Chamberlain's Company, with Shakespeare as one of the actors. It was not very successful. Its author's excessive anxiety to make it historically correct gave it an over-learned air, and his careful fidelity to classic models made it too rigid in structure for the taste of an Elizabethan audience. Jonson wisely returned to comedy, and wrote in collaboration with Chapman and Marston the play *Eastward Hoe!* which deals in a delightfully realistic fashion with the lighter side of London citizen life. It brought its authors, however, into serious trouble. King James was now on the throne, and some reflections contained in the play upon the 'industrious Scots,' aroused his ire. The three authors suffered a short imprisonment but escaped the mutilation which was sometimes the punishment for offences of this nature. Shortly afterward Jonson seems to have managed to make his peace with the King, for he was employed in the production of a number of masques and Court entertainments which proved extremely profitable to him, and he retained the royal favour till the end of King James's life.

Jonson now entered upon the most successful and happy period of his career. During the next ten years he wrote his four greatest comedies—*Volpone* (1605), *The Silent Woman*

Ben Jonson 206
Gerard Honthorst

(1609), *The Alchemist* (1610), and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). All of these are masterpieces of their kind. *The Alchemist* perhaps stands first, by virtue of its wonderfully constructed plot. The threads of a highly complex action are woven into a smooth and perfect whole with an art which has been the admiration of critics from Jonson's day to our own. The play illustrates all its author's most characteristic qualities. It is a fine example of the 'comedy of humours' which he introduced—the word 'humour' being used in its Elizabethan sense of a predominating trait caused by the presence in the body of a large quantity of one particular 'humour' or fluid. It is realistic, forsaking the fanciful and romantic themes that Ben Jonson scorned, and dealing, as he affirms, with life as it really is. It follows the rules of classical drama, and observes the "Unities of Time, Place, and Action." In his prologue to *Every Man in His Humour* Ben Jonson had set forth his views of what comedy should be. The author of the play, he says:

> Hath not so loved the stage,
> As he dare serve the ill customs of the age,
> Or purchase your delight at such a rate,
> As, for it, he himself must justly hate:
> To make a child now swaddled, to proceed
> Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,
> Past three-score years; or, with three rusty swords,
> And help of some few foot and half-foot words,
> Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars,
> And in the Tyring house bring wounds to scars.
> He rather prays you will be pleased to see
> One such to-day, as other plays should be;
> Where neither chorus wafts you o'er the seas,
> Nor creaking throne comes down the boys to please;
> Nor nimble squib is seen to make afear'd
> The gentlewomen; nor rolled bullet heard
> To say, it thunders; nor tempestuous drum
> Rumbles, to tell you when the storm doth come;
> But deeds, and language, such as men do use,
> And persons, such as comedy would choose,
> When she would show an image of the times,
> And sport with human follies, not with crimes.

Jonson's 'sport' is somewhat heavy, and his humour a little grim. His work has none of the lightness and grace that distinguish the work of the early Elizabethans. Its merit lies

in its strong, robust manly tone, and the vigour of its conception and execution.

In 1610, when *The Alchemist* was first produced, quacks and pretended magicians were to be found in such numbers in London that they had become a serious public nuisance. Jonson directed his satire against their knavery and the foolish credulity of those who consulted them, with the result, we are told, that the trade of the alchemists became far less profitable. The play tells the story of a pretended alchemist, his confederates and his dupes. The scene is laid in London during a season in which the plague has been raging in the city. Lovewit, a wealthy gentleman, has fled from the infection and left his house in charge of his butler, Face. Face, who is a witty, impudent, amusing rascal, meets the alchemist, Subtle, as he afterward reminds him

> At Pie-corner,
> Taking your meal of steam in from cook's stalls,
> Where, like the father of hunger, you did walk.

The two enter into an agreement, and procure the services of a female accomplice, Dol Common. Subtle takes up his abode in Lovewit's house, sets up his forge and all the apparatus of his deception, and awaits the dupes whom it is the business of Face and Dol Common to send in. Face is by turns a swaggering captain, ruffling it in the places of public resort, and the assistant of Subtle in his mysteries. The procession of dupes begins with a lawyer's clerk, Dapper. "I lighted on him," says Face, "last night, in Holborn, at the Dagger." The clerk is given to betting, and Face has persuaded him that the alchemist can provide him with a 'familiar' who will make him successful in all his ventures. Him the two accomplices fool to the utmost, Face pretending the greatest reverence for Subtle and lauding his mysterious powers. They persuade poor Dapper that the Queen of Fairy claims him for her nephew, and is anxious to see him, they promise him a familiar that shall enable him to "win up all the money in the town," and "blow up gamester after gamester as they do crackers in a puppet play," and on this understanding he parts with all the

money he has about him. He is to come again that noon, and meanwhile is to prepare himself by fasting and purification for the mystic rites. Next comes Abel Drugger, a seller of tobacco.

> I am a young beginner, and am building
> Of a new shop, an't like your worship, just
> At corner of a street :—Here is the plot on 't—
> And I would know by art, sir, of your worship,
> Which way I should make my door, by necromancy,
> And where my shelves ; and which should be for boxes,
> And which for pots. I would be glad to thrive, sir.
> And I was wish'd to your worship by a gentleman,
> One Captain Face, that says you know men's planets
> And their good angels and their bad.

Abel receives a learned answer, and goes away happy—with empty pockets, and an engagement to come again. A more notable figure now appears, Sir Epicure Mammon. With him comes Pertinax Surly, a gamester. Sir Epicure desires no less than the philosopher's stone, which can convert all metals into gold. His visions of wealth to come are dazzling in their magnificence, and he believes that they are on the point of being realized.

> This is the day, wherein to all my friends
> I will pronounce the happy word, BE RICH !

Surly is incredulous, but Face, now disguised as a servant, and Subtle, in his grave alchemist's habit, so work upon Sir Epicure that his friend's warnings fall useless, and he goes away convinced that the operation is nearly completed, and not regretting the ten pounds he has given to the alchemist to buy new materials required in the work. Scarcely has he gone when another knock is heard, and there enters a messenger, one Ananias, from the church at Amsterdam. Subtle and Face combine to mystify him by talking unmeaning jargon, about

> Ars sacra
> Or chrysopœia or spagyrica,
> Or the pamphysick or panarchick knowledge,

and so on. But Ananias is not overawed, and delivers his message, which is that the brethren will not venture more than the hundred and twenty pounds they have already given

until they see some result from the work. At this Subtle pretends to fly into a rage and drives Ananias forth, bidding him

> Send your elders
> Hither to make atonement for you quickly,
> And give me satisfaction ; or out goes
> The fire ; and down the alembics, and the furnace. . . .
> All hope of rooting out the bishops
> Or the antichristian hierarchy, shall perish,
> If they stay three-score minutes.

He speedily returns with a pastor of the church, Tribulation Wholesome, whom Subtle soon persuades of his power to supply the Church with a talisman,

> To pay an army in the field, to buy
> The King of France out of his realm, or Spain
> Out of his Indies. . . .
> Even the med'cnal use shall make you a faction,
> And party in the realm. As put the case,
> That some great man in state, he have the gout,
> Why you but send three drops of your elixir,
> You help him straight : there you have made a friend.

Tribulation is induced to give money for more coal and other necessaries.

The procession of dupes is concluded by Kastril, a young man who has just inherited a fortune of three thousand a year,

> A gentleman newly warm in his land,
> Scarce cold in his one and twenty,

who wishes to learn how to carry himself as a gallant about town. He comes with his sister, a rich young widow, who wishes for a second husband. How all these return to Lovewit's house at the times appointed, the complications that ensue, the sudden return of the master of the house, Face's hasty change back to his original *rôle*, of butler, his attempts to deceive his master and their failure, his confession and league with Lovewit, the threatening of Dol Common and Subtle with the terrors of the law, their hasty flight, and the division of the spoils left behind—including the widow, who becomes Mrs. Lovewit—these bring the comedy to a triumphant conclusion.

The Alchemist does not appear to have had, at first, an altogether favourable reception. Perhaps it hit too hard at the

follies of some in the audience. The poet Herrick, who was one of the band of young men who proudly called themselves the 'sons' of Ben Jonson, speaks indignantly of the 'ignorance' of those

> Who once hist
> At thy unequall'd play the Alchemist.

Soon, however, it triumphed over this temporary prejudice and became one of the most popular plays of the day. When the theatres were re-opened at the Restoration, it was revived, and Pepys notes in his diary that he went twice during the summer of 1661 to see that "most incomparable play *The Alchemist*."

We do not know when Shakespeare and Ben Jonson became personally acquainted—whether before or after the production of *Every Man in His Humour*. But we know that for many years they lived on terms of close friendship. Jonson has been charged with a spiteful jealousy of his greater comrade, but careful inquiry has shown that there is no foundation for the charge. He is known to have given some unfavourable criticisms of Shakespeare's works, but in this there was no personal feeling. Jonson had a definite theory of the art of dramatic writing, and was quick—possibly a little too quick—to denounce work not done in accordance with it. But no praise could be more generous and more discriminating than that which he gave to Shakespeare, in the lines that he wrote for the first folio of the collected plays, in 1623.

> . . . . I confess thy writings to be such
> As neither Man nor Muse can praise too much. . . .
> Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show
> To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
> He was not of an age, but for all time!

Such is the strain in which he sings of his 'master' Shakespeare. "Within a very few years of Shakespeare's death," says Sir Sidney Lee, "Sir Nicholas L'Estrange, an industrious collector of anecdotes, put into writing an Anecdote . . . attesting the amicable relations that habitually subsisted between Shakespeare and Jonson. 'Shakespeare,' ran the

story, ' was godfather to one of Ben Jonson's children, and after the christening, being in a deep study, Jonson came to cheer him up and asked him why he was so melancholy. ' No, faith, Ben,' says he, ' not I, but I have been considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my godchild, and I have resolved at last.' ' I pr'y thee, what ? ' sayes he. ' I' faith, Ben, I'll e'en give him a dozen, good *Lattin* spoons, and thou shalt translate them.' " Latten, it should be remembered, is a mixed metal resembling brass.

Of the celebrated meetings between the two poets at the Mermaid Tavern, Bread Street, Thomas Fuller has given us an account. " Many were the wit-combats betwixt him [Shakespeare] and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war; Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Later, after the death of Shakespeare, the meeting-place of the wits was changed from the Mermaid to the Apollo (or big room) of the Devil Tavern, Temple Bar. Here Jonson reigned as a king among a band of loyal and devoted subjects. The younger poets of the day gathered round him and offered him enthusiastic homage. They have preserved for us the memory of the old poet grown corpulent and unwieldy with age, of his ' rocky face,' the stoop of his great shoulders, his loud voice and hectoring manner. We see him sitting at the head of the table while toasts were drunk and witty jests went round, and the mirth grew faster and more furious as the night advanced. Among the company was a young man named Robert Herrick, son of a goldsmith of Cheapside, who had lately left St. John's College, Cambridge, and settled in London. He was one of the most devoted of the poet's ' sons,' and highly favoured by the ' master ' for his wit, his good-fellowship and his poetic talent. He it is who has told us, in the poems addressed to

Ben Jonson, much of what we know about those 'lyric feasts.'

> Where we such clusters had,
> As made us nobly wild, not mad ;
> And yet each verse of thine
> Out-did the meat, out-did the frolic wine
>
> My Ben !
> Or come again :
> Or send to us,
> Thy wit's great overplus ;
> But teach us yet
> Wisely to husband it
> Lest we that talent spend,
> And having once brought to an end
> That precious stock ; the store
> Of such a wit the world should have no more.

Ben Jonson died in 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, where his grave bears the inscription, best known perhaps of all that have been written on the graves of poets—" O rare Ben Jonson ! "

CHAPTER XXIV

THE TEMPLE

HISTORY shows us the reign of Charles I as a long grim struggle between the Parliament and the King—a struggle which grew ever more bitter and more intense up to the closing tragedy of January 1649. But the literature of the period—until the actual breaking out of the Civil War—reflects little of this strife. Milton, in his studious retreat at Horton, was writing his delightful pastoral poems *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Herrick in his lovely Devonshire parsonage was celebrating the delights of the once 'loathèd west.' Of the lesser poets two main groups may be distinguished. The first consisted of the gay and brilliant company that gathered at the Court, of whom Lovelace and Suckling were the chief. These paid but small heed to grave matters of State. They lounged about Whitehall, and showed themselves, exquisitely attired, in all the fashionable resorts of the day. They were gallants of the new school, who had discarded the fervid enthusiasm of the Elizabethans, and had taken in its place a gay audacity, an airy recklessness, which left its mark upon the brilliant literature they produced. They sang of their pleasures and their loves in graceful, tuneful songs, and they produced occasionally, and almost as it were by chance, some really beautiful lyric like Suckling's *Ballad on a Wedding*, or Lovelace's *To Althea from Prison*, by means of which they won for themselves immortality.

The second group consisted of poets whose work was of a very different character. Of these Mr. Shorthouse has said that "their peculiar mission seems to have been to show the English people what a fine gentleman, one who was also a

Christian and a Churchman, might be." Chief among the group was George Herbert, a member of the noble family of Pembroke. In the year 1627, he gave up his office as Orator of Cambridge, and the honourable and distinguished career that lay before him, in order to be ordained as a clergyman of the Church of England. "He did," says Izaak Walton, who was Herbert's first biographer, "acquaint a court friend with his resolution to enter into sacred Orders, who persuaded him to alter it, as too mean an employment, and too much below his birth, and the excellent abilities and endowments of his mind. To whom he replied, 'It hath been formerly adjudged that the domestic servants of the King of Heaven should be of the noblest families of earth. And though the iniquity of the late times has made clergymen meanly valued, and the sacred name of Priest contemptible; yet I will labour to make it honourable, by consecrating all my learning, and all my poor abilities to advance the glory of that God that gave them; knowing that I can never do too much for Him, that hath done so much for me, as to make me a Christian. And I will labour to be like my Saviour, by making humility lovely in the eyes of all men, and by following the merciful and meek example of my dear Jesus.'"

In this spirit he took up his work. In 1630 he was presented by the King to the living of Bemerton in Wiltshire. The tiny church of Bemerton stood on the high road between Salisbury and Wilton, and was in a ruinous condition when Herbert became rector. He caused it to be put in thorough repair, and he rebuilt the parsonage of which "almost three parts were fallen down and decayed." The situation of the parsonage was, Walton tells us, more pleasant than healthful. Its windows looked out over low-lying meadow-lands, and across the slow-flowing little River Madder, to where the spire of Salisbury Cathedral rose in the distance. It was not the best home for a man who, like Mr. Herbert, had "a body apt to a consumption and to fevers and other infirmities," and it probably helped to bring about his early death. But before the end came there were three years of life to be lived—years

which he filled so full of love and devotion and willing service that they stand out clear to our later age, radiant with "the beauty of holiness." Of these three years *The Temple* is the record and memorial.

Mr. George Herbert was, Walton tells us, "of a stature inclining towards tallness; his body was very straight, and so far from being cumbered with too much flesh that he was lean to extremity. His aspect was cheerful, and his speech and motion did both declare him a gentleman." His beautiful, high-born wife had given up with "a cheerful willingness the dignity which had belonged to her position in her father's house," to become the wife of a parish priest who "can challenge no precedence or place but that which she purchases by her obliging humility." With them in the parsonage were Mr. Herbert's two nieces, living, as he wrote to his brother, "so lovingly, lying, eating, walking, praying, working still together, that I take a comfort therein." These four made up the household, where 'plain living' was dignified by 'high thinking,' and where Mr. Herbert's precept—

> Let thy mind's sweetness have his operation
> Upon thy body, clothes, and habitation,

was most fully carried out.

In his parish Herbert lived "a life so full of charity, humility, and all Christian virtues that it deserves the eloquence of St. Chrysostom to commend and declare it." He was the personal friend of each member of his flock, and gave them loving sympathy as well as alms.

The joy of loving service grew with each day's labour, and the fastidious Cambridge scholar whose chief fault had been noted as a certain haughtiness toward those inferior to him in station—the courtier who had shown "a genteel humour for cloathes and courtlike company"—learnt to welcome the opportunity of performing any act of helpfulness, however humble its nature. Once when he was on his way to Salisbury to join his musical friends in an 'appointed private music meeting' he met on the road a carrier who was in difficulties with his load. Herbert stopped and throwing off his

216

Photo. Emery Walker Ltd

coat, helped the man to unload and rearrange the horse's burden; then proceeded on his way to Salisbury, with his array somewhat disordered. Some of his friends expressed surprise that "Mr. George Herbert, who used to be so trim and clean, came into that company so soiled and discomposed." He told his story, and then, in answer to those who blamed him for undertaking such "dirty employment" he said, that his conscience would not have allowed him to be easy had he neglected such an obvious duty. "For if I be bound to pray for all that be in distress," he said, "I am sure I am bound, so far as it is in my power, to practise what I pray for. And though I do not wish for the like occasion every day, yet let me tell you, I would not willingly pass one day of my life without comforting a sad soul or showing mercy; and I praise God for this occasion. And now let's tune our instruments."

For the Church and for its services Herbert felt a strong and passionate attachment. Every day, at ten o'clock and at four, he with his family and his servants, came to the little church and joined in public worship to God. Soon from the gentlemen's families around about among whom the "holy Mr. Herbert" was held in high esteem, came one after another to increase the numbers of the little congregation; and "some of the meaner sort of his parish did so love and reverence Mr. Herbert that they would let their plough rest when Mr. Herbert's Saints' bell rung to prayers, that they might also offer their devotions to God with him, and would then return back to their plough." He taught his people that God should be worshipped with outward decorum as well as with inward reverence; he preached to them plainly and simply on the great truths of their religion, and he instructed them with zeal and thoroughness in the doctrines of the Church, showing them "that the whole service of the Church was a reasonable and therefore an acceptable sacrifice to God."

Gradually, in this life of constant devotion, the conception of the Church as the symbol of man's spiritual life grew clearer and clearer in Herbert's mind, and the idea of his book, *The Temple*, was formed. It is probable that many of the poems

that he wove into it were written before he came to Bemerton. Some of them show unmistakable signs of having been written during those years when Herbert had been torn between a desire for the fame and the reward that a worldly career would give him, and a consciousness that in the humble and obscure office of a parish priest he could best glorify God. The book is a record of the writer's spiritual life, the doubt, the wavering, the depression and keen agony through which he came to the happy serenity of his later years; and this thread of personal experience running through it helps to give unity to the whole and to make it not merely a collection of poems but a book.

First comes a long poem of seventy-eight stanzas, called *The Church Porch*, which tells how man must strive to purify his heart and life before he can hope to attain to full spiritual communion with God. Plain duties are set forward with a directness and vigour of language that have made the poem dear to ordinary, everyday men and women from the seventeenth century to our own time.

> Lie not: but let thy heart be true to God,
> Thy mouth to it, thy actions to them both;
> Cowards tell lies, and those that fear the rod;
> The stormy working soul spits lies and froth.
> Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie;
> A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby.
>
> Chase brave employments with a naked sword
> Throughout the world. Fool not; for all may have,
> If they dare try, a glorious life, or grave.
>
> Pitch thy behaviour low, thy projects high;
> So shalt thou humble and magnanimous be:
> Sink not in spirit; who aimeth at the sky,
> Shoots higher much than he that means a tree.
>
> In brief, acquit thee bravely, play the man.

These are a few typical extracts from *The Church Porch*, enough, perhaps, to show something of its tone and spirit There follow a hundred and sixty-nine short poems which show the greatest variety in subject and in form. Some continue the allegory implied in the name *The Temple*.

> Thou, whom the former precepts have
> Sprinkled and taught, how to behave
> Thyself in church; approach, and taste
> The Church's mystical repast.

Avoid profaneness ; come not here :
Nothing but holy, pure, and clear,
Or that which groaneth to be so,
May at his peril further go.

There are poems on *Church Monuments, Church Music, The Church Lock and Key, The Church Floor, The Church Windows.* To all these objects is given a curious and sometimes beautiful symbolism. The chequered marble of the floor denotes various moral virtues :

. . . That square and speckled stone
Which looks so firm and strong, is Patience.
And the other black and grave, wherewith each one
Is chequered all along,
Humility.

and each is joined to the others by the cement of love and charity. This series of poems culminates in *The Altar,* in which the lines are arranged so that the whole, as printed, actually forms the shape of an altar. In this instance, as in his use of far-fetched conceits and over-fanciful images, Herbert was affected by the prevailing but perverted taste of his day. His own inclination is toward simplicity and directness, and in his noblest verses these qualities are finely shown.

To all the different seasons of the Church's year poems are allotted. There are poems also on *Holy Baptism* and *Holy Communion,* and then come a number which do not fall directly into the structural plan, but which set forth the various phases of the spiritual life. The titles of these are in many cases quaint and homely, giving no idea of the subject of the poem. *The Pulley,* for example, tells how God, when He first made man, bestowed upon him " strength, beauty, wisdom, honour, pleasure " ; then

Made a stay,
Perceiving that alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.

The Collar tells of the rebellion of a soul against the restraints that religion would impose upon it; the passion rises, and swells to defiant resolution; then comes the wonderful close, so full of poetic beauty, so surprising, and yet so satisfying.

But as I rav'd, and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling "Child!"
And I reply'd, "My Lord."

Perhaps the best known of all the poems of *The Temple* is that on 'Virtue,' which owes its familiarity partly to the fact that it is quoted in Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler*. "And now," he says, "look about you and see how pleasantly that meadow looks; nay, and the earth smells as sweetly too. Come, let me tell you what holy Mr. Herbert says of such days and flowers as these; and then we will thank God that we enjoy them, and walk to the river and sit down quietly, and try to catch the other brace of trouts." And then he quotes the poem, which begins:

Sweet Day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky;
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

The form and metre of the poems show, like their subject-matter, the greatest variety. "Out of one hundred and sixty-nine poems, one hundred and sixteen are written in metres that are not repeated."

The book was finished by the beginning of 1633, and by that time George Herbert's life was drawing toward its end. "He died," says Izaak Walton, "like a saint unspotted of the world, full of alms-deeds, full of humility, and all the examples of a virtuous life." He was buried March 3, 1633, in his own church, under the altar.

From his deathbed Herbert sent the manuscript of *The*

Temple to his friend Nicholas Ferrar. "Tell him," he said, "that he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master; in whose service I have now found perfect freedom: desire him to read it; and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor soul, let it be made public: if not let him burn it."

Nicholas Ferrar was, next to Herbert, the man to whom the Anglican Church of the days of Charles I owed most. He wrote no poetry himself, but he was the friend and the inspirer of poets. He had founded at Little Gidding, a village about eighteen miles from Cambridge, the community which was mockingly called by his enemies the "Protestant nunnery," and which plays such an important part in Mr. Shorthouse's fine novel, *John Inglesant*. Here Ferrar, with various members of his family, thirty in all, lived a life of retirement, devotion, and good works. He had been Herbert's friend, when both were young students at Cambridge, and though in after life they had seen little of each other, their aims and ideals remained in perfect sympathy. Ferrar took the manuscript of *The Temple* home to Little Gidding, and it is probable that it was first privately printed for circulation among the members of the community there. Before the end of the year 1633 it was published, with a preface by Nicholas Ferrar. It became at once very popular. When Walton wrote his *Life of George Herbert* in 1674, twenty thousand copies, he tells us, had been sold; and fresh editions have been issued at intervals up to the present day. Its influence on the poets of the generation immediately succeeding Herbert's was immense. Crashaw and Vaughan, the greatest of these, may be regarded as Herbert's spiritual sons; and of the mass of religious poetry which the Caroline age produced it is the representative and consummation.

CHAPTER XXV

THE HESPERIDES

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
Of April, May, of June and July flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes. . . .
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The Court of Mab, and of the Fairy King.
I write of Hell: I sing, and ever shall,
Of Heaven—and hope to have it after all.

IT was during the dark days when the great Civil War was nearly over, and the people of England were beginning to realize, with passionate horror or with stern satisfaction, that Charles I must die, that Herrick's book of poems, thus introduced, was published. There could scarcely have been a time when men would have been less ready to listen to his fresh and fragrant songs. All the other Cavalier singers were hushed. Carew had met his death before the troubles began. Lovelace and Suckling had fought in the King's cause, and had died ruined and in misery. Crashaw was in Rome; and Cowley was travelling hither and thither over the Continent working desperately for the Royal cause. Herrick alone had sung on through all those years of strife; and when the triumph of the Parliamentary cause had driven him to London, he had sat down, with the cries of conflicting parties in his ears, to prepare for publication his sparkling and joyous lays.

Yet Herrick too was a Royalist, and had followed the course of the war with keen interest, and celebrated the King's victories in triumphant verse. But he was, above everything else, a poet, and his nature was dreamy and sensuous rather than quick and ardent. He was content to look on while other

men agonized and fought. Yet though Herrick was no hero, he was a man of sweet, kindly and sincere nature, and it was a true instinct that kept him out of the conflict that destroyed so many of his brethren, and beat down for a time even the soaring genius of John Milton. It was his work to cherish the Renaissance spirit while from the world around him it was quickly passing away, and to bring back by his joyous light-hearted songs some of the colour and glory of the Elizabethan age.

But in 1648 few men were in the mood to listen to him, and *The Hesperides* received but scant attention. In the next year the tragedy of the King's execution sent a thrill of horror through the country. Men read in a passion of pity and recovered loyalty, the book which purported to show them their King, patient, suffering, forgiving, the martyr of an ungrateful people. This book, the *Eikon Basilike*, went through fifty editions in England and on the Continent in 1648–49, and men turned from it to enter eagerly into the pamphlet war which was going on between the two great parties in the State. For the next ten years little was read in England save works on politics and religion. By the Puritans Herrick's work would under any circumstances have been regarded with horror, and the Royalists had little heart for his junketings and merry-makings.

The book, however, is well worthy of the consideration that a later age has given it. "It is," says Mr. Edmund Gosse, "a storehouse of lovely things, full of tiny beauties of various kind and workmanship, like a box full of all sorts of jewels and ropes of seed-pearls, opals set in old-fashioned shifting settings, antique gilt trifles sadly tarnished by time; here a ruby, here an amethyst, and there a stray diamond, priceless and luminous, flashing light from all its facets, and dulling the faded jewellery with which it is so promiscuously huddled." There are in all 1231 poems in the book, though many of them are very short, some consisting of two lines only. A few were probably written during Herrick's early years in London, when he worshipped at the shrine of Ben Jonson, and frequented the

taverns at which the wits held their meetings. Such is perhaps the date of the careless, pagan lyric beginning :

> I fear no earthly powers,
> But care for crowns of flowers ;
> And love to have my beard
> With wine and oil besmeared.
> This day I'll drown all sorrow ;
> Who knows to live to-morrow ?

In 1629, when he was thirty-seven years old, Herrick obtained the living of Dean Prior, in South Devon. He was not the model parish priest that we have seen in George Herbert ; yet he took up his charge at Dean Prior with the most sincere resolution to do his duty, and to occupy himself in nothing that could be deemed unworthy of his high calling. To this end he began by solemnly renouncing his poetic craft. In a poem that strikes a higher note than most of his lyrics, he bade his *Farewell unto Poetry :*

> But unto me be only hoarse, since now
> (Heaven and my soul bear record of my vow)
> I my desires screw from thee, and direct
> Them and my thoughts to that sublim'd respect
> And conscience unto priesthood. . . .

But, fortunately for English poetry, the vow was not kept. The poetic impulse was too strong for any barrier to stand against it, and soon Herrick was writing as freely as ever, only striving, as he tells us, to keep his verses pure, and free from the licence which had marred the

> Unbaptized rhymes
> Writ in my wild, unhallowed times.

The sweetest and most characteristic of the verses contained in *The Hesperides* Herrick wrote in his quiet Devonshire parsonage. At first he railed against the fate that had exiled him to the 'loathèd west,' far from the society which was nowhere to be found save in " the blest place of his nativity." But later he grew to love his beautiful home, and he gained from it a sweeter and more wholesome inspiration than would have visited him in London. The parsonage at Dean Prior was, we gather, an old and rather dilapidated building. An ancient

Robert Herrick 224

From a contemporary Engraving

Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

serving-maid, named Prudence Baldwin, looked after the vicar's comfort, and, if we may judge by the epitaph he afterward wrote upon her, served him very faithfully. A pig that he had taught how to drink out of a tankard, a tame lamb, a dog, a cat, a goose, a cock and a hen were Herrick's household companions. His own description of his home in the poem *A Thanksgiving to God*, is quaint and beautiful. He thanks God for giving him "A little house whose humble roof is waterproof," and goes on:

> Like as my parlour, so my hall
> And kitchen's small.
> A little buttery, and therein
> A little bin,
> Which keeps my little loaf of bread
> Unchipt, unflead.

These, with his fire, his food, his drink, the plenty of his land, and the produce of his animals—

> All these and better thou dost send
> Me to this end,—
> That I should render for my part
> A thankful heart.

He grew to know and love all the sights and sounds of the country, which had seemed so strange to him at first. On the fresh spring mornings he rose with the sweet-singing lark; and when the day came on which the "budding boys and girls went out to bring in May," Herrick was there too, and saw them come "with white-thorn laden home"; then while Aurora threw "her fair fresh-quilted colours through the air," he walked with the merry company through the village where

> Each field turns a street; each street a park,
> Made green and trimmed with trees: see how
> Devotion gives each house a bough
> Or branch: each porch, each door ere this,
> An ark, a tabernacle is
> Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove.

Doubtless, too, he shared in the 'cakes and cream' which awaited the revellers when they reached home. He walked about the fields, and wove his quaint fancies concerning the

flowers. "Why do you weep, sweet babes?" he asked the primroses that bent under their load of morning dew,

> Speak, whim'pring younglings, and make known
> The reason why
> Ye droop and weep;
> Is it for want of sleep,
> Or childish lullaby?
> Or that ye have not seen as yet
> The violet?

When he saw the tall, white lilies growing in a cottage garden, he promised some imaginary love that from the dust of their golden anthers he would make sweet "cream of cowslips" which she should spread as butter upon the bread made of "paste of filberts," that he would bring her. His fancy peopled the pleasant meadows with tiny fairy shapes, and saw them spread their little mushroom table with a feast for Oberon, the Fairy King.

> And now we must imagine first,
> The elves present to quench his thirst
> A pure seed-pearl of infant dew,
> Brought and besweeten'd in a blue
> And pregnant violet;

and so we are taken through the other items of the feast—the horns of papery butterflies, the little fuz-ball pudding that was too coarse for his Majesty's taste, the emmet's eggs, the beards of mice, the newt's stewed thigh, with all the rest of the fantastic dishes on which Herrick's fancy dwelt so merrily. Or, again, the deserted meadows call up to the poet's mind a still fairer picture of the maids who have "spent their hours" in them and now are gone.

> Ye have beheld how they
> With wicker arks did come,
> To kiss and bear away
> The richer cowslips home.
>
> You've heard them sweetly sing,
> And seen them in a round;
> Each virgin, like a spring,
> With honeysuckles crown'd.
>
> But now we see none here,
> Whose silvery feet did tread,
> And with dishevell'd hair
> Adorn'd this smoother mead.

At all the merry-makings round about—the wakes and morris dances, the Christmas mummings and Twelfth night revels, Herrick was a familiar figure. We can imagine that he was outdone by none of his parishioners in his enjoyment of the "tarts and custards, creams and cakes," the pageants, the players, the dancing—even the 'cudgel-play' that came "near the dying of the day." We can imagine too that the parson's genial face, with its massive jaw and Roman nose, and its crown of thick, curling black hair, was a welcome sight to every lass and lad and man and woman who joined in the simple revels. His parishioners were his friends, and though he did not labour for their spiritual welfare with the devoted zeal that marked George Herbert's work as a parish priest, he did his best for them according to the light that was in him "The threshold of my door," he says,

> Is worn by th' poor,
> Who thither come, and freely get
> Good words, or meat.

If any strict and solemn Puritan happened to find his way from the warring outside world to the peaceful remoteness of Dean Prior he probably found little that encouraged him to remain, for it would have been difficult to convince the members of that happy community, upheld as they were by the authority of their vicar, that mince-pies at Christmas were sinful, and that to dance round the maypole showed an unregenerate heart. They might have answered him in Herrick's own words—which they probably knew, for his poems were freely passed about in manuscript before they were printed :

> Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,
> And take the harmless folly of the time.

Thus Herrick's busy, though not laborious days passed happily away, and when the evening came he went home to his little parlour, where the "brittle sticks of thorn or brier" made his fire. We can think of him sitting there in the ease and warmth that he loved, with nothing to disturb his luxurious musings save "a choir of singing crickets by the fire"; the

"green-eyed kitling" sitting by his side, on the watch for the "brisk mouse" who might be tempted from its hole by the unbroken quiet. Then all sorts of lovely fancies came thronging into his head, and set themselves to rich though delicate music and strains from the old classical poems. Perhaps he called up the figures of those airy, unsubstantial loves of his—Julia, Corinna, Perilla, Anthea and the rest—whom he met in the White Island of Dreams, where he was wont to wander, and addressed them with pretty trifling or dainty flattery; or rose even to that note of real passion which is heard in such verses as the last of those addressed "To Anthea":

> Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
> The very eyes of me;
> And hast command of every part,
> To live and die for thee.

Sometimes his thoughts took a graver turn, and he mused on the things belonging to religion and to holiness. In such a mood he wrote his famous *Litany*.

> In the hour of my distress,
> When temptations me oppress,
> And when I my sins confess,
> Sweet Spirit, comfort me!
>
> When I lie within my bed,
> Sick in heart, and sick in head,
> And with doubts discomforted,
> Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

But it was difficult for Herrick to think even of his own death without surrounding it with sweet sensuous images that take away its terrors. So we soon find him adjuring Anthea to bury him "under that holyoak, or gospel tree," where there will be room for her to lie beside him,—

> For my embalming, Sweetest, there will be
> No need of spices, when I'm laid by thee.

Perilla is bidden to

> Follow me weeping to my turf, and there
> Let fall a primrose, and with it a tear.

and even the Robin Red-breast must help to give sweetness to his obsequies.

> Laid out for dead, let thy last kindness be
> With leaves and moss-work for to cover me;
> And while the wood-nymphs my cold corpse inter,
> Sing thou my dirge, sweet-warbling chorister!
> For epitaph, in foliage, next write this:
> Here, here the tomb of Robin Herrick is!

But Robert Herrick had some troublous times to go through before his final epitaph could be written. In 1647 the triumphant Parliamentary party was engaged in forcing Presbyterianism on a reluctant people, and even remote Dean Prior did not escape the visitation of its commissioners. We can imagine with what grief and surprise the villagers saw their vicar, who had become such a familiar part of their lives, driven from his place. To Herrick, at first, the change does not seem to have been quite unwelcome. London had remained to him, through all his eighteen years of exile, the City of Desire, the brilliant home of great reputations and fulfilled ambitions. He hurried away from the west, taking with him the store of poems that he had collected, and when he got to London, he hastened, as we have seen, to get these into print. He put them together without classification or arrangement, and with nothing to indicate the order in which they were written. Only the religious poems, *Noble Numbers* as he called them, were placed by themselves and dated 1647. So in the midst of clamour and harsh cries while the two forces of the State strove in their last death-grapple, this book of sunshine and flowers and perfumes gathered in the far-off west, came into being.

Poor Herrick! He had dreamed perhaps at Dean Prior of the time when he should bring his poems to London and receive the acclamations of the wits and the poets assembled in just such a company as, in the old days, had gathered round his master, Ben Jonson. He had looked for fame and honour and general applause and all he received was cold neglect. The public did not want his poems, and all the wits of his day were dead or scattered. He could not look across the ages and

see the renown which waited for him there. He was lonely and poor and growing old, and London was no longer his kindly birthplace, but a city strange and hard. We do not know how he spent the fourteen years of his London life, but we know he was obscure and unprosperous, and we feel sure that he was unhappy. In 1662, when King Charles II had been for two years on the throne, and Herrick had probably almost despaired of receiving any sign of royal favour, his living was restored to him. He went back to Dean Prior and there spent the remaining twelve years of his life—peacefully, as we suppose, though no record remains to tell how the old man of seventy-one settled down in his former place. He sang no more; his muse seems to have deserted him with the quenching of his gaiety, and though we cannot think that he ever really lost his delight in life, yet it is a sobered and a chastened Herrick whom we picture sitting in the familiar little parlour of the parsonage house. We hope that his new maid, whoever she was, attended to his wants as cheerfully and faithfully as old Prew had done; and we hope that the men and matrons of the village, whom he had known as toddling children and as blooming youths and maidens were kind and gentle to the old vicar who had helped to make their earlier years glad and blithe. But we do not know, for the only record that remains to us is that contained in the church register of Dean Prior, "Robert Herrick, Vicker, was buried ye 15th day of October 1674."

The Restoration Period

BY the time that Charles II came to the throne the Elizabethan spirit had entirely died out of our literature. The gay, daring, gallant note was gone, and in its place sounded the deep and solemn music of conquered but unsubdued Puritanism. The intense moral earnestness of the Puritan, and his pre-occupation with matters of religion made it impossible for him to write on light or secular subjects ; while the echo of the long and bitter strife which had ended in the Restoration gave added sternness to his words.

It was not long, however, before a new influence came to drive out the spirit of Puritanism. The brilliant, witty and dissolute court of Charles II inspired a literature which reflected its own qualities. More especially is this the case with the drama of the period ; no more sparkling comedies can be found than those of Congreve, Wycherley and their school, and none of such low moral tone. Enthusiasm gave way to a cool cynicism, wit was valued far more highly than the finest imaginative qualities. At the same time all exuberance of expression was pruned away, and a clear, lucid, concise style was cultivated, both in poetry and prose. The great creative age with its adventurous methods was over, and an age of intellectual brilliancy took its place.

CHAPTER XXVI

PARADISE LOST

MILTON is the only one among our great English poets who, consciously and with solemn purpose prepared and educated himself for the work he was to do. As a young man he resolved that he would one day write a great poem; and thenceforth his whole life was ordered to fit him for this end. It was not, as with Richard Hakluyt, a strong attraction of interest that drew him toward his life-work; nor was he, like Francis Bacon, impelled by a great intellectual passion. The force that worked within him was an intense moral earnestness, induced partly by his Puritan upbringing, partly by the natural gravity of his disposition. Life, as he conceived it, meant work for the glory of God and the edification of man. The reckless literary improvidence of the Elizabethans, who flung their treasures of wit and poetry on this side and that, was impossible to John Milton. Not so would he spend the powers bestowed on him, but would cherish them with a careful passion, waiting through long years till they grew stronger and more disciplined, and fit for the work which in due season they were to accomplish. Not only the intellectual powers, but the whole man must be chastened and perfected; or, in Milton's own noble words, "He who would not be frustrated of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem, . . . not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities unless he have in himself the experience and practice of all that is praiseworthy."

The outward circumstances of Milton's life during childhood, youth, and early manhood, were entirely favourable to the

attainment of this ideal. His father was a scrivener who had prospered in his calling. So that when his son John was born in 1608, he was living in Bread Street, which was then 'wholly inhabited by rich merchants.' Here, above the father's shop or office, the family lived. There were John Milton the elder, his wife, of whom we know nothing, his two sons, John and Christopher, and his daughter Anne. The house was an ideal nursery for a poet. The father was a man of high character and culture, a skilful musician, and a composer of some note. He had many friends among musicians and men of learning, who often gathered at his house. So that although Puritan ideals of order and regularity governed the household, there was little of Puritan gloom or narrowness. The father seems from the very first to have recognized that his eldest son was not quite as other children were, and could not be made to fit in with ordinary rules, or judged by ordinary standards. The boy was treated always as one marked out and dedicated for a great work.

The early years of Milton's life were the closing years of Shakespeare's; and in after days Milton must have thought, with a thrill of keenest interest, of the many times that the elder poet had passed before the house where he himself was growing out of infancy into boyhood. For the Mermaid Tavern was in Bread Street, and when Shakespeare came up from Stratford to London, as we believe he often did during the last peaceful years of his life, he doubtless went sometimes to join the company of wits and poets at the famous club. Mr. Masson, Milton's biographer, suggests that perhaps on one of these occasions Shakespeare may have met in the street the fair-haired, beautiful little boy who was afterwards to stand with him in the front rank of English poets; and that memories of his own son, Hamnet, who had died so many years before, may have kindled within him for a moment a feeling of loving, fatherly interest. It is not impossible that such a meeting took place, and it is pleasant to think of even such a slight connexion between our two great poets.

We know very little of Milton's childhood, beyond what he

himself has told us in autobiographical passages of his works. He went to St. Paul's School—Dean Colet's famous foundation—and his father engaged for him also a private tutor, Thomas Young, who was " esteemed to have such an excellent way of training up youth that none in his time went beyond it." Milton showed the greatest ardour for learning, which, he says, " I seized with such eagerness that from the twelfth year of my age I scarce ever went to bed before midnight." His father looked on, well pleased to sanction even this excessive devotion to study. He hoped to see his son a great and famous divine of the English Church, and he felt, at second hand, the fervour that inspired the boy. Books, teachers, leisure—all things that a student could desire were Milton's. There are three books that we know, by the internal evidence of his works, that he must have specially studied. First in order of importance is the Bible. The Authorized Version was published when Milton was three years old, and we may be sure that a copy of it soon made its way to the scrivener's household. Milton had that close and intimate knowledge of its language which comes only of early familiarity. Its phrases and cadences entered into his speech as its teaching entered into his life. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* was undoubtedly the chief of those ' lofty fables and romances,' among which, he tells us, his " young feet wandered," and its influence, also, is clearly seen in his work. Third on the list comes a long epic poem, *The Divine Weeks*, written in 1578 by a French Huguenot, Du Bartas. It treats of the Creation, and perhaps gave Milton some ideas for his *Paradise Lost*. It was translated into English in 1606.

In 1625, when he was sixteen years old, Milton went to Christ's College, Cambridge. Various stories are told of his university career, and it seems certain that at least once he got into serious trouble with the authorities. The offence had probably something to do with his religious opinions. The nickname, " the lady of Christ's," given him in good-natured mockery by his fellow students, testified to the purity, and perhaps to the ultra-scrupulousness of his conduct.

During the seven years that he spent at the university, Milton's attitude toward the Church of England was slowly changing, and when he left, at the age of twenty-three, he had quite made up his mind that he could not enter on the career that had been planned for him. By this time Archbishop Laud had made himself supreme in the English Church and had introduced ceremonies which were highly distasteful to Milton's Puritan notions. "To the service of the Church," he says, "I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions, till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded in the Church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave. . . . I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing."

The disappointment fell heavily on the elder John Milton, but he had been to some extent prepared for it, and would in no way attempt to interfere with his son's honest convictions. Milton had by this time decided that his life-work was to be the production of a great poem. He refused to enter one of the learned professions, or, indeed, any profession at all. He wanted, he said, some years of quietness and leisure, during which he might read, think, observe, and prepare himself, according to the utmost of his powers, for his life-work. He felt that those powers were at present crude and immature; that, as he expresses it in the sonnet, "On his being arrived to the age of twenty-three," he had none of the "inward ripeness . . . that some more timely happy spirits indueth."

Many fathers might have felt that, after seven years of university life, the request for more time in which to study was unreasonable. But the father of John Milton, had, as has been said, a strong and understanding sympathy with his great son, and once more the way was made smooth for that son's feet. Milton felt his father's kindness deeply, and acknowledged it warmly. "For thou didst not, my father," he says, "bid me go where the broad way is open, the ready mart of exchange, where there shines the sure and golden hope of heaping up coin, . . . but desiring me rather to enrich my mind by cultivation,

Milton's Mulberry Tree
Christ's College, Cambridge
Photo. Frith & Co.

thou allowest me far from the noise of town, and shut up in deep retreats to wander, a happy companion by Apollo's side, through the leisured sweetness of Aonian glades."

The 'deep retreat' was the little village of Horton, in Buckinghamshire, where his father, having retired with a comfortable fortune, had established himself. Though Horton was only seventeen miles from London there was, in those days, little communication with the capital. It was a true country village; the River Colne flowed through it, and there were great stretches of meadowland and wooded slopes all around. Windsor Castle, set on a hill among its noble trees, was to be seen in the distance.

Five quiet happy years were spent at Horton, free, as far as we can tell, from any trace of care or strife. During this time Milton wrote his two delightful country poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, his elegy *Lycidas*, and the masques *Arcades* and *Comus*. These, though they alone would entitle him to a high place among English poets, he counted but as small things, mere experiments in the art to which he had devoted himself. He had a "mind made and set wholly on the accomplishment of greatest things." He did not seek knowledge with the true scholar's love of knowledge as an end in itself. In the strictest sense of the word he was not a scholar. He sought only to know "that which is of use to know," which means all that would help him to write his great poem.

As the fifth year at Horton drew to a close it seems to have been decided by Milton and his father that the time had come for foreign travel to take its part in this great scheme of education, and early in 1638 Milton started on a Continental tour. He visited Paris, Nice, Genoa, Florence, Rome and Naples. He met in familiar intercourse the most eminent men of learning in Italy; at Florence he visited Galileo; and everywhere he was praised and admired both for his personal qualities, and for his poems. Hearing of the troubles in England, he resolved to cut his tour short, and he reached home in August 1639.

The time for the fulfilment of his great purpose seemed now to have come, and there are signs that he himself felt that the

preparation was almost complete. "You make many inquiries as to what I am about," he had written just before he started for the Continent, to his friend, Charles Diodati, "what am I thinking of? Why, with God's help, of immortality! Forgive the word, I only whisper it in your ear! Yes, I am pluming my wings for a flight." In 1638 we have in one of his Latin poems the first indication that he had thought of some definite subject as suitable for his great work. "I shall revive in song our native princes, and among them Arthur moving to the fray even in the nether world." There are other indications that for some time the story of King Arthur occupied his thoughts, and that he almost decided to make it his subject.

When Milton returned from the Continent he did not go back to Horton, but settled in London, took a house in Aldersgate, and received into it the two sons of his sister Anne, John and Edward Phillips, whom he undertook to educate. Still the thought of his poem was uppermost in his mind. He felt, he says, "an inward prompting which now grows daily upon me that by labour and intent study, which I take to be my portion in this life, joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die." There is in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, a manuscript written by Milton in 1641. It contains a list of about a hundred subjects, jotted down, apparently from time to time, as they occurred to his mind. They are all either historical or Scriptural. The historical subjects are chosen from British history, and King Arthur appears among them. The Scriptural are taken from both the Old and the New Testament. Four are concerned with the Fall of Man, and for one of these the actual title *Paradise Lost* is used. The plan of these four is sketched out much more fully than is the case with the other subjects, some of which are merely named. It is evident that Milton now felt that he had drawn near to the great work which he had seen from afar through so many years. Yet still he did not seriously set his hand to the task, though he probably drew up many

schemes and wrote out some passages that he incorporated later in his poem. In his pamphlet, *The Reason of Church Government*, 1642, he says, with regard to his literary projects, "The accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above man's to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself as far as life and free leisure will extend, and that the land had once enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of Prelaty under whose inquisitorial and tyrannical duncery no free and splendid wit can flourish. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amorist or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit which can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the life of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous acts and affairs."

This pamphlet *On Church Government* shows that Milton was, in 1641, becoming absorbed in the great struggle that was just opening; and for twenty years that struggle claimed all his energies. He left "a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts to embark in a troubled sea of noises and harsh disputes." From the remote heights where he had dwelt apart, undisturbed by the ordinary cares of life, he had come down to the crowded lowland; and where the crowd was thickest, the noise greatest, and the strife most bitter, there he was to be found during all those unquiet years. He fought hard, but he fought ineffectually, for the aloofness of his life had taught him little concerning the nature of man or of the great human forces with which he now had to do.

During this period Milton wrote pamphlet after pamphlet, most of which make painful reading for those who have idealized him as the author of *Paradise Lost.* He attacked the enemies of the Parliamentary Party with unmeasured abuse. Taunts, scoffs, personal insults, spiteful railing served him for argument. He threw mud, and mud was thrown back at him; and with it all he probably failed to influence, in the smallest degree, the course of events. When the Commonwealth was established he became Latin Secretary to the Council of State, and in that capacity was involved in the undignified and disastrous controversy with Salmasius, a scholar of Leyden University, which was, as he believed, the final cause of his blindness. For years his eyes had been failing; by 1650 the sight of the left had gone. His doctor warned him that only perfect rest could save the other. "The choice lay before me," says Milton, "between dereliction of a supreme duty and loss of eyesight; in such a case I could not listen to the physician, not if Æsculapius himself had spoken from his sanctuary; I could not but obey that inward monitor, I know not what, that spake to me from heaven. I considered with myself that many had purchased less good with worse ill, as they who give their lives to reap only glory, and I thereupon concluded to employ the little remaining eyesight I was to enjoy in doing this, the greatest service to the common weal it was in my power to render."

In the volume of political literature which Milton was at this time writing with such fluency and fervour, there were, it need scarcely be said, many great and noble passages, rich in all the graces that his splendid imagination could bestow. But these are, after all, a poor exchange for the poems he might have given us had party strife not claimed him.

In his own home Milton failed to find the peace which might have made up to him for the turbulence of his public career. He married in 1643, Mary Powell, daughter of a Royalist Oxfordshire squire. The marriage was hasty and ill-advised. There could be very little prospect of sympathy between the grave poet of thirty-five, with his great enthusiasms and

absorbing projects, and the country girl of seventeen, used to the gay and stirring life of a Royalist household. Her husband's lofty austerity chilled and frightened her, the long days spent in his quiet, frugal home had neither interest not variety. Milton, on his side, found that she could not enter into his great schemes, and could not give him the intelligent, soothing companionship he had hoped to gain. At the end of the first month of married life she entreated to be allowed to pay a visit to her home, and once there, refused to return. It was not until two years later when the failure of the Royalist cause had ruined her father, and placed the whole family in danger, that she sought forgiveness and reconciliation. Milton, with the fine magnanimity of his nature, not only received her, but sheltered and protected her relations in his own home. Of the seven years that followed this reconciliation we know little. Mary Milton died in 1652, leaving her husband with three little daughters, the oldest six years of age. In 1656 he married Catherine Woodcock, but she died fifteen months later, and he was again left alone. His father, his best and most sympathetic friend, had died in 1646.

In 1660 came the Restoration, and with it the end of Milton's political career. For a time he was in danger of imprisonment, and was actually in the custody of the sergeant-at-arms. He suffered heavy money losses, including £2000 he had placed in Government securities under the Commonwealth. But he was not held to be of sufficient importance for the new government to concern itself greatly about him, and he was left in peace.

The long interval of twenty years was over; the battle was finished, the champion had retired, unsubdued but inglorious, from the field. Milton was free once more to follow the vision of his earlier days, which for so long had been hidden by the smoke and dust of the conflict. He must have looked back, as these thoughts passed through his mind, to the time which seemed so long ago, when he had just returned from the Continent, young, hopeful, ardent, with all the powers of body and mind of the finest and most perfect temper. And then he

must have thought sadly of his present self in the dark year of 1660—prematurely old, blind, and worn with strenuous living; impoverished, though not actually poor, neglected and little thought of, owing his safety to the contemptuous toleration of his political opponents. But the bitterest element in his suffering must have been the realization that, after all, the evil had triumphed over the good, the saints of the earth had been overthrown by the men of Belial. For this was what the Restoration meant to John Milton; the cause with which he had so long identified himself, he held, with all his heart and soul, to be the cause of God.

If he had sat down in inaction, pleading that he had fought a good fight, offering, as the fulfilment of his youthful pledge, the work that he had done for his country and his religion, we might have been inclined to admit the justice of his plea. But he did not do this. At the age of fifty-two he began the great work of his life. His powers were as great as they had ever been, and were chastened and matured by the experiences of his life.

Milton's first idea had been to put his great work in the form of a drama, after the model of the "lofty grave tragedians of Greece." But as years brought maturity of judgment, a truer instinct led him to the epic. So soon as his short imprisonment was over, and he had settled down in a small house at Holborn, the few fragments of his work which had been previously written, were brought out and reviewed, and work was begun in earnest. And now Milton felt, to the fullest extent, how terrible was the darkness that had fallen upon him. He could not work as he would, his genius must wait upon the pleasure of others; and he had no one near him to give the effectual, ready help that his infirmity claimed. Hired helpers failed through lack of education and intelligent sympathy. His daughters, now growing up to an age at which they might be useful, should have been his loving, willing assistants. But they seem to have had little love for their father, and no interest in this work. This was, it cannot be doubted, partly Milton's own fault. His views concerning the nature and position of women he has set forth in detail in some

of his prose works; they were, he asserted, naturally inferior to man in all respects, and were created to minister to him and live in subjection to his will. These theories he had carried out in the upbringing of his daughters, and the evil results were now to be seen. The help he exacted from them was given in a grudging and sullen spirit. They had received but little education, and Milton had refused to have them taught any language but their own. One tongue, he said scornfully, was enough for a woman. Yet when his blindness made a reader necessary to him, he was at pains to teach them the pronunciation of five or six languages, in which they were compelled to read to him, without having any notion of the sense. It is perhaps little wonder that they rebelled. They did more. Milton's house was mismanaged, his money wasted, his servants encouraged to deceive him. A thousand petty miseries vexed and distracted his soul, and prevented him from "beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies." He had, indeed, "fallen on evil days . . . in darkness . . . and solitude." Yet, through all, the great work went on. Outside his own home he found friends and helpers. He seems, indeed, to have had a special attraction for young and able men with scholarly tastes. "He had daily about him," we are told by his nephew, Edward Phillips, "one or other to read to him; some persons of man's estate, who, of their own accord greedily catch'd at the opportunity of being his reader, that they might as well reap the benefit of what they read to him, as oblige him by the benefit of their reading; others of younger years sent by their parents to the same end." These bear witness to the charm of his conversation and the winning cheerfulness of his manner, qualities which his home relations failed to bring out. Milton was unfortunate in this, that his complete absorption in ideas and theories stood between him and the ordinary, everyday interests of life, so that he too often appeared harsh and unloving when he was only preoccupied.

After three years of hard and sometimes distressful labour *Paradise Lost* was finished, saving only the repolishing and

revision. Milton wrote, as he believed, under the direct inspiration of the Muse—

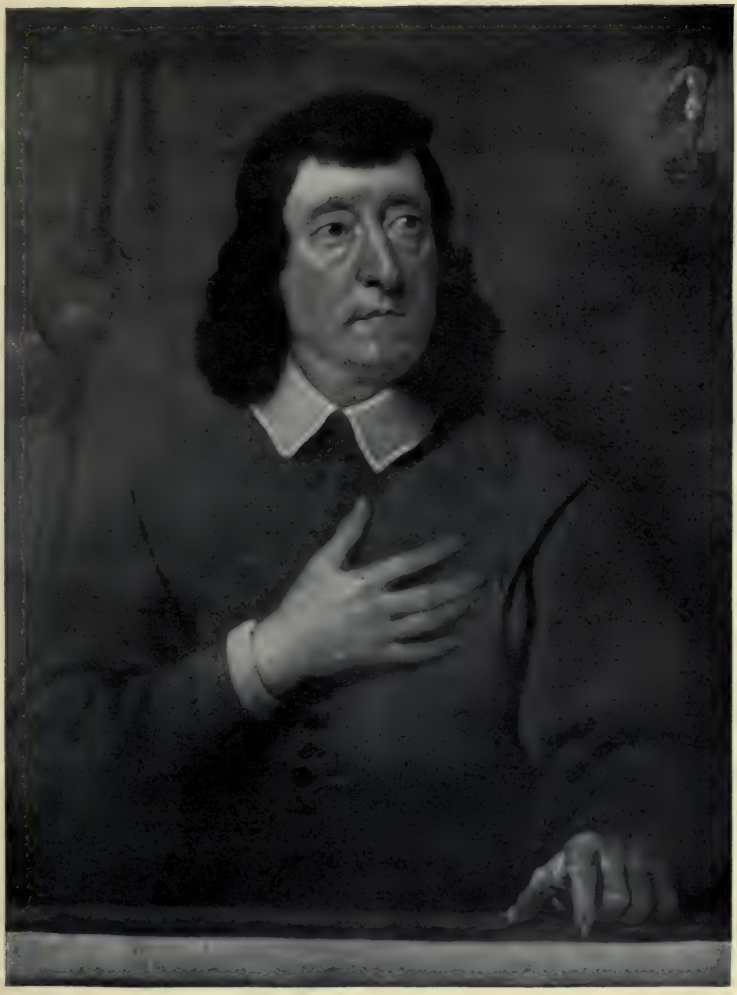
> My celestial patroness, who deigns
> Her nightly visitation unimplored,
> And dictates to me slumb'ring, or inspires
> Easy my unpremeditated verse.

Of the poem it is praise enough to say that it is worthy of the long preparation, the pains and toil and weary waiting which went to its making. We regret the long years that Milton spent in political controversy, yet they too helped to give glory to this crowning achievement. The depth and passion of *Paradise Lost* would have been unattainable to the untried student who knew sin and sorrow only as far-off evils that had not entered into his carefully cherished and sequestered life. The vastness of the conception needed mature powers for its working out. Its scene is the universe, its characters include not men alone, but devils, angels—even God himself.

Heaven he pictures as the "pure empyrean, high throned above all highth, infinitely extended," and walled with a crystal wall, with towers and battlements. A gate in this wall opens on to Chaos—

> A dark
> Illimitable ocean, without bound,
> Without dimension, where length, breadth and highth,
> And time and place, are lost; where eldest Night
> And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
> Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
> Of endless wars, and by confusion stand:
> For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
> Strive here for mastery and to battle bring
> Their embryon atoms.

In the depths of Chaos is Hell, "the house of woe and pain," with a fiery lake in the middle round which lies a dismal stretch of land "that ever burned with solid, as the lake with liquid fire," and beyond lies "a frozen continent, dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms of whirlwind and dire hail." Our Universe God shaped out of Chaos. In six days He finished the work of creation, then fastened His new-made world safely by a golden chain to heaven. He made



John Milton
Pieter Van der Plaas]
Photo. W. A. Mansell & Co.

also a staircase, " ascending by degrees magnificent up to the wall of heav'n," and at the top placed " a kingly palace gate, with frontispiece of diamond and gold embellished."

The hero, if so he may be called, of the epic is Satan, and nowhere has Milton shown more nobility and largeness of conception than in his presentment of this chief of the fallen angels. The devil of mediæval legend, grotesque and horrible, has disappeared. In his place comes one who

> Above the rest
> In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
> Stood like a tow'r ; his form had not yet lost
> All her original brightness, nor appeared
> Less than Arch-angel ruined, and th' excess
> Of glory obscured. . . .
> But his face
> Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
> Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
> Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
> Waiting revenge : cruel his eye, but cast
> Signs of remorse and passion to behold
> The fellows of his crime. . . .
> He now prepared to speak. . . .
> Thrice he assayed, and thrice in spite of scorn,
> Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth.

Soon after *Paradise Lost* was finished Milton married for the third time, probably mainly for the purpose of securing for himself domestic comfort. His third wife seems to have been a kindly, capable woman who managed his household well, and shielded him from the petty annoyances which before had disturbed him. Under these happier circumstances the revision of *Paradise Lost* went on, and was completed by 1665. Then came the dreadful plague year, followed by the year of the Great Fire, which delayed the publication until the autumn of 1667. Milton was paid £5 down and was to receive an additional £5 for each edition disposed of. He received in his lifetime the payment for the first edition, making £10 in all, and after his death his wife compounded for her interest in the poem for the sum of £8. It gained at first little attention, for the spirit of the time was not in accordance with its lofty and religious tone. It has never become widely popular, though it has had in every age its band of enthusiasts. Milton's

aspiration that he might find "fit audience, though few," has been fulfilled.

The remaining years of the poet's life were calm and peaceful. In 1663 he had removed to a house situated in what is now known as Bunhill Row, and here he lived until his death, eleven years later. His daughters, who, still formed an element of discord in his home, were sent out, about 1668, to learn the art of gold and silver embroidery, in order that they might be able to support themselves. His wife attended faithfully to his material wants, and he had devoted friends, chief among them the young Quaker, Thomas Ellwood, who gave him ready help. Two other great poems he produced during those quiet years, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. His life was simple and regular. He had renounced his old habit of sitting up far into the night, though now, alas, the night and the day held for him little difference. He went to bed at nine, and rose at four in summer and five in winter. Sometimes a long wakeful night was spent in an effort at composition, and yet in the morning, not a single line was forthcoming for dictation to the amanuensis. At other times he composed readily, and next day poured out long passages which his brain had fashioned during the night hours. Sometimes verses came to him as he walked in his garden, or sat 'contemplating' in his study. The morning was given to his work, the afternoon to exercise and recreation. In the evening from six to eight he received his friends, and recreated his mind with conversation. His old taste for music and his skill as a performer remained to him, and he was accustomed to play both on the organ and the bass viol. So his days passed away. Visitors have told how they found him sitting in the sunshine at the door of his house, clad in a "grey, coarse, cloth coat," his hands, swollen with gout, resting on his knees, his eyes shining "with an unclouded light, just like the eyes of one whose vision is perfect." He grew gradually weaker, and on November 8, 1674, just a month before his sixty-sixth birthday, he died, "with so little pain that the time of his expiring was not perceived by those in the room."

CHAPTER XXVII

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL

WHEN Charles II came back after his long exile, there were two great poets living in England. One was the blind and prematurely old John Milton, the other was John Dryden. Dryden was then nearly thirty years old and had left the University of Cambridge in 1657. He had written one notable poem on the death of Cromwell, and had probably done a good deal of unacknowledged hack-work for the bookseller in whose house he lodged. The Restoration, which condemned Milton to poverty and obscurity, gave Dryden a chance of fame and fortune. It reopened the playhouses which the Puritan rule had closed, and thus restored play-writing to the position it had formerly held as the branch of literary art likely to bring the quickest and fullest return both in reputation and in money. It gave an opportunity also for adulatory verse addressed to the new ruler, and of this Dryden was so quick to avail himself that he produced, in the year of the Restoration, his poem *Astræa Redux*, a panegyric on the coronation of Charles. This was followed by various other pieces of the same class, the chief being *Annus Mirabilis* (1667).

But it was to dramatic poetry that Dryden most confidently trusted. He began his career as a playwright in 1663 with a comedy, *The Wild Gallant*, and for seventeen years he continued to write industriously for the stage. Not one among the many comedies and tragedies that he produced is of supreme merit, although most of them contain passages that show the masterful way in which he could manage the metre he had chosen for his work—the heroic couplet, and that have an energy of thought and diction peculiarly Dryden's own. They

have done little, almost nothing, to increase his permanent reputation as a poet, though they made him famous in his own day, and provided him with a comfortable income on which to bring up his three sons. The tone of nearly all the Restoration literature is dissolute in the extreme, and Dryden allowed his work to be tainted with the prevailing fault of the day, so that few of his works could be presented on a modern stage. The chief value of his plays was as a preparation for the greater work that he was to accomplish at a later time. "They acted," Professor Saintsbury says, "as a filtering reservoir for his poetical powers, so that the stream which when it ran into them, was the turbid and rubbish-laden current of *Annus Mirabilis* flowed out as impetuous, as strong, but clear and without base admixture, in the splendid verse of *Absalom and Achitophel.*"

The story of *Absalom and Achitophel* is concerned with the politics of the day. Charles II had been reigning for twenty years, and the nation had begun to discover something of the real nature of the king they had welcomed so warmly in 1660. One cause of dissatisfaction lay in the common rumour that Charles was, like his brother, a Roman Catholic; another in the suspicion of a dishonourable alliance with France. As one disclosure followed another the temper of the people rose to a dangerous pitch of angry excitement. There were not wanting men ready to take advantage of this state of feeling for personal or political purposes. In 1678 Titus Oates, a discredited clergyman, pretended to discover a plot on the part of the Roman Catholics to murder the King and place the Duke of York on the throne. The nation, excited and uneasy, gave full belief to this and other preposterous stories which Oates and his followers swore to vehemently. A panic followed, and the unfortunate victims accused by these infamous men of complicity in Popish plots had little chance of justice from the frenzied juries before whom they appeared. A series of 'judicial murders' followed. The nation completely lost its head, and a shuddering horror of their Roman Catholic neighbours possessed all except a small and over-mastered minority.

The scheming and ambitious Lord Shaftesbury saw how this "no Popery" cry might be used for party purposes. He skilfully fomented the agitation, and introduced in 1679, when the frenzy was at its wildest, a Bill to exclude the Duke of York from succession to the throne. Charles saved his brother's interests by dissolving Parliament, but this only incited Shaftesbury to more daring schemes. Fresh stories of plots and massacres maintained the public excitement, and, in 1680, Monmouth, an illegitimate son of Charles II, was openly paraded in London as the heir to the throne, chosen by the Protestants. Soon, however, the tide began to turn. A feeling of horror at the butcheries which had been committed in the name of justice took possession of the people. The King took advantage of these signs of Shaftesbury's waning influence to cause him to be impeached on a charge of suborning false witnesses to the plot. Excitement rose again, for Shaftesbury was regarded by the Protestant party as their main hope. London, more especially, was devoted to him, and his trial threw the whole city into a state of angry consternation. It was at this crisis, about the middle of November 1681, that *Absalom and Achitophel* appeared.

It is said that Charles himself suggested to Dryden that he should come to the assistance of the Court party by writing a satire on its opponents. Whether this was so or not cannot be certainly known, but there is no doubt that Dryden's work did do that party great service. Produced as it was in haste, at a time when party spirit was at its wildest and bitterest, we might perhaps have expected that the poem would prove simply a temporary squib, worthless when once let off. Instead of that it has taken its place among the classics of English literature. It is the greatest satirical poem in the language.

The poem is founded on the account of Absalom's rebellion against King David, given in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of the Second Book of Samuel. David is, of course, Charles II, and Absalom is the Duke of Monmouth. Dryden is careful throughout to treat Monmouth with tenderness, for the King's affection for him was well known. He is

represented as being led away by evil counsellors, who work upon his consciousness of royal birth and kingly qualities to draw him into an enterprise from which at first he shrinks in horror. Extravagant praise is lavished upon him :

> Whate'er he did was done with so much ease,
> In him alone 'twas natural to please ;
> His motions all accompanied with grace,
> And Paradise was opened in his face.

For a time all went well, and

> Praised and loved the noble youth remained,
> While David undisturbed in Zion reigned.

But soon the people grew discontented. The Jews (that is, the English),

> A headstrong, moody, murmuring race
> As ever tried the extent and stretch of grace,
> Began to dream they wanted liberty.

A plot was formed, for

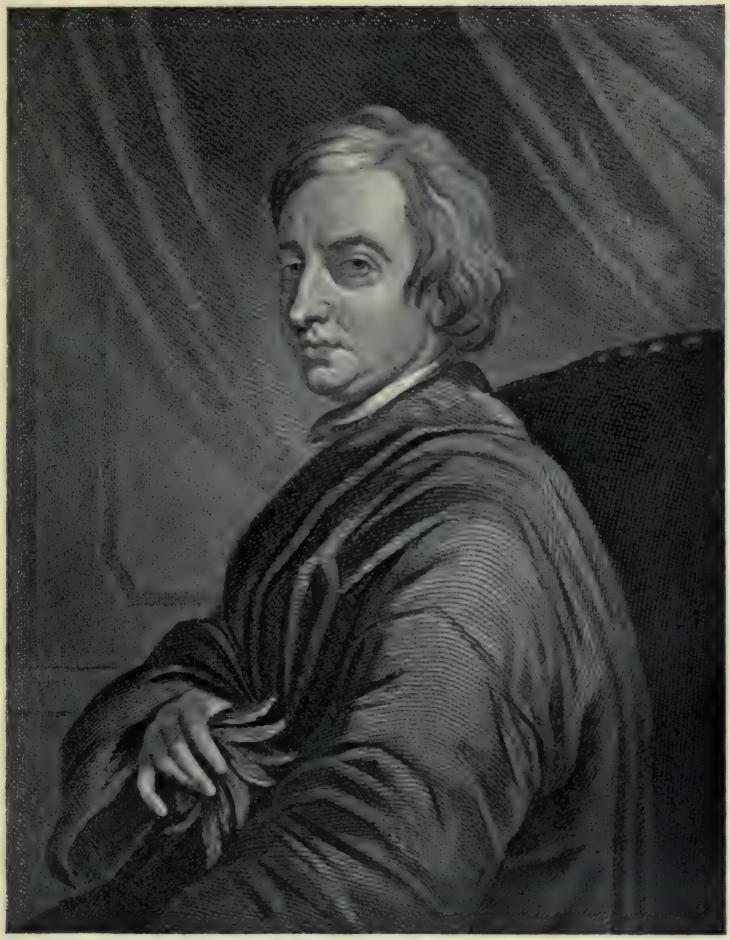
> Plots, true or false, are necessary things,
> To raise up commonwealths and ruin kings.

The movers in the plot were the Jebusites (Roman Catholics), and though it failed it had a "deep and dangerous consequence."

> Several factions from this first ferment
> Work up to foam and threat the government.

Discontented men everywhere seized the opportunity of turning upon the monarch whose 'fatal mercy' had in many cases pardoned those who had before shown themselves to be his enemies, and had even raised some of them to 'power and public office high.' Then follows the bitter and masterly sketch of Shaftesbury, under the name of Achitophel.

> Of these the false Achitophel was first,
> A name to all succeeding ages curst,
> For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
> Sagacious, bold and turbulent of wit,
> Restless, unfixed in principles and place,
> In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace ;
> A fiery soul, which working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay
> And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.



John Dryden 250

From an engraving after Thos. Hudson

A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high
He sought the storms ; but for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit. . . .
In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state.

This dangerous and unscrupulous man looked round to find some one whom he could set up in opposition to King David, and "none was found so fit as warlike Absalom." So with "studied arts to please" Achitophel attempted to draw the young man into a rebellion against his father—at first unsuccessfully, for Absalom replies, "What pretence have I, To take up arms for public liberty ?" But at last he was won over, and Achitophel proceeded to unite "the malcontents of all the Israelites," chief among them the "Solymœan rout," or city rabble—for Shaftesbury's great strength lay among the citizens of London. In the list of those who joined the rebellion comes Zimri, who stands for the Duke of Buckingham,

A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome :
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by starts, and nothing long ;
But in the course of one revolving moon
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon.

After him comes Shimei, or Slingsby Bethel, a Sheriff of London and a noted republican.

When two or three were gathered to declaim
Against the monarch of Jerusalem,
Shimei was always in the midst of them.

Then Corah, or Titus Oates,

His memory, miraculously great,
Could plots exceeding man's belief repeat ;
Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
For human wit could never such devise.

Led by these false friends, Absalom raised the standard of rebellion.

Now what relief can righteous David bring ?
How fatal 'tis to be too good a king !

Then follow the names of those who were faithful to the King in his adversity. Barzillai (the Duke of Ormond) "crowned

with honour and with years," then Hushai (Laurence Hyde), who "joined experience to his native truth," are the chief of these. The poem ends with a speech by David, threatening his enemies, with the vengeance they have provoked. "The conclusion of the story," wrote Dryden in his preparatory note "To the Reader," "I purposely forbore to prosecute, because I could not obtain from myself to show Absalom unfortunate. . . . Were I the inventor, who am only the historian, I should certainly conclude the piece with the reconcilement of Absalom to David. And who knows but this may come to pass?"

The poem was published in November 1681, probably on the 17th, just a week before Shaftesbury's trial for high treason at the Old Bailey. The Court party probably hoped that the poem would help to ensure his conviction, but if so they were disappointed. London remained faithful to Shaftesbury, and the grand jury threw out the Bill of indictment. Nevertheless *Absalom and Achitophel* must be accounted a great success. It was published anonymously, though the fact of Dryden's authorship was well known. Its sale was enormous. The first edition was soon exhausted, and a second, which contained a few additions, was produced within a month. The Court party was delighted, and the Exclusionists were furious.

Several answers to this great satire—which was being read everywhere, and extolled or reviled according to the opinions of the readers—were attempted. But none of them was worthy of serious consideration and most contented themselves with abuse of the author, and neglected to answer the charges he had made. Dryden replied to them collectively in a second poem called *The Medal.* Shaftesbury's friends had caused a medal to be struck commemorating his acquittal, and it was on this that Dryden based his new satire, published March 1682. "I have only one favour to desire of you at parting," said Dryden, at the end of his *Epistle to the Whigs*, which preceded *The Medal,* "that when you think of answering this poem, you would employ the same pens against it who have combated with so much success against *Absalom and Achitophel;* for then you may assure yourselves of a clear victory, without the least reply.

Rail at me abundantly, and, not to break a custom, do it without wit." The 'favour' was granted; or if the answers to *The Medal* were not by the same hand as were the answers to *Absalom and Achitophel*, they were equally scurrilous and equally dull. One, written by Thomas Shadwell, passed all bounds of decency. It was a bitter personal attack upon Dryden, who was accused of the most scandalous conduct in both his public and his private life. Dryden retaliated with *Mac Flecknoe*, which later gave Pope the idea for his *Dunciad*. Nor was this the only castigation that Shadwell received.

In November 1682 appeared the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*. The publisher, Jacob Tonson, gave the following account of its origin and authorship. "In the year 1680 Mr. Dryden undertook the poem of *Absalom and Achitophel* upon the desire of King Charles the Second. The performance was applauded by every one, and several persons pressing him to write a second part, he, upon declining it himself, spoke to Mr. Tate to write one, and gave him his advice in the direction of it; and that part beginning:

> Next these, a troop of busy spirits press,

and ending,

> To talk like Doeg and to write like thee,

containing near two hundred verses, were entirely Mr. Dryden's composition, besides some touches in other places."

Dryden was now a noted man, the head of the republic of letters, a great literary dictator, as Ben Jonson had been before him. His headquarters were at Will's Coffee-House, Covent Garden. Here from the armchair which was placed near the fire in winter, and on the balcony in summer, he talked with the crowd of wits and gallants who gathered round him. On one of these occasions, during the last year of Dryden's life, it is said that a little boy, not twelve years old, undersized, delicate and deformed, but with brilliant eyes shining out of his pale face, was brought into the room where he sat. The boy was the son of Roman Catholic parents who lived at Binfield, but in 1699 he was a boarder at a school near Hyde Park Corner, and at his earnest entreaties, his schoolmaster had taken him to

'Will's' that he might catch a glimpse of the great man. His name was Alexander Pope, and he was to be England's next famous poet.

Dryden's two great poems, *Religio Laici* (1682) and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), with some well-known elegies and odes written during these later years, raised his reputation to a very high point, and he was in a position of comfortable independence when the Revolution of 1688 swept away his offices and pensions. The last years of his life were spent, not in poverty, but in reduced and straitened circumstances, though he retained his position as literary dictator. Being forced to write for a living he returned again to the theatre, but met with little success. He next attempted some classical translations, and these were very favourably received, as was his modernized rendering of parts of Chaucer, produced during the last year of his life. He died on April 30, 1700.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

WHEN Milton in 1667 published his *Paradise Lost* he probably believed himself to be the last prophet of a fallen cause, and as such he appeared to the small company of cultured Puritans—remnant of a great party—that gathered round him during his later years. A new literature was growing up—the brilliant, witty, dissolute literature of the Restoration. Dryden and Wycherley were at work on their licentious comedies, and a crowd of courtly writers—Waller, Roscommon, Sedley and Rochester—were writing verses whose lightness and grace could not, to those who remembered the solemn music of *Paradise Lost* and the sober loveliness of *Comus*, atone for an utter lack of lofty or serious purpose. They looked around and saw no one who could be the Elisha to the great prophet they revered, and receive the mantle of inspiration which was soon to fall from his shoulders.

Yet the man destined to be Milton's successor as the prophet of religion was, at that very time, almost ready to take up his great work. He was one whom Milton would probably have been loth to acknowledge as a fellow-worker, for he belonged to the 'common people,' the 'miscellaneous rabble,' that the poet of *Paradise Lost* regarded with lofty contempt. His name was John Bunyan, and he came, as he tells us, "of a low and inconsiderable generation," his father's house "being of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all the families in the land." During the five years of studious retirement which Milton spent at Horton, John Bunyan, some miles away, was growing up in the home of his father, the poor

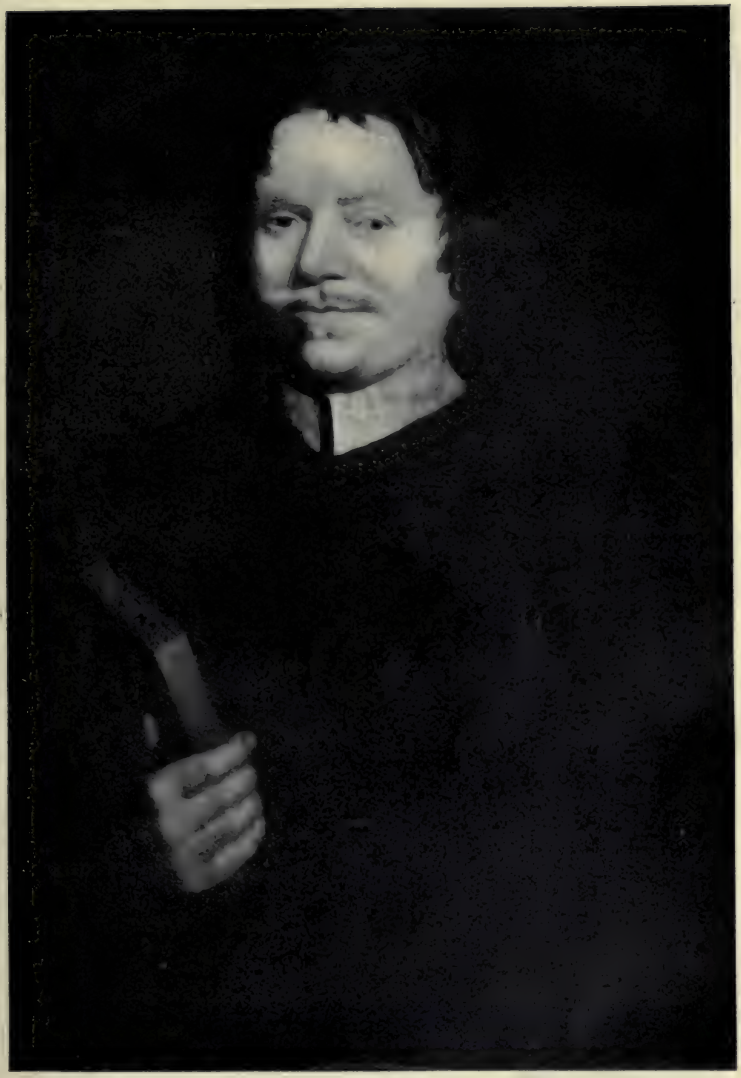
tinker of Elstow. The lives of these two representative Puritans present, indeed, in almost every particular the most complete contrast. In place of Milton's early devotion to learning we have Bunyan's confession that although "notwithstanding the meanness and inconsiderableness of my parents, it pleased God to put it into their hearts to put me to school, to learn me both to read and write; the which I also attained according to the rate of other men's children," yet "to my shame I confess I did soon lose that little I learned, even almost utterly." At an age when Milton was still a student at Cambridge, Bunyan had served for a year in the Parliamentary army, had married, was the father of two children, and was earning a living for his family by the exercise of his father's trade. During the latter years of the Commonwealth he added to these labours the work of a preacher of the Baptist community; and the Restoration, which drove Milton into retirement, placed John Bunyan in jail, as an offender against the newly revived Act of Uniformity. In jail he remained for twelve years until the Declaration of Indulgence issued by Charles II released him in 1672. He took up his work as a preacher once more, and during the years which saw Milton's decline and death, his fame increased so that he became known as the greatest living Protestant preacher. In 1675 he was again imprisoned, and while in jail he began his great work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He was released early in 1676, and left unmolested in his work, until his death in 1688.

The mental and spiritual development of these two great men, shows an even greater contrast than their outward circumstances. The nature of John Milton expanded freely and naturally, as a flower opens under favourable influences of sunshine and fresh air. But John Bunyan reached the maturity of his powers through agony and striving, with the bursting of strong chains, with hard blows that wounded the man while they broke his fetters. The conviction of sin worked in him so strongly that when he was only nine or ten years old he believed that he "had few equals" for cursing, swearing, lying

and blaspheming the holy name of God. "Yea, so settled and rooted was I in these things, that they became as a second nature to me; the which, as I have also with soberness considered since, did so offend the Lord, that even in my childhood he did scare and affrighten me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with fearful visions. For often, after I had spent this and the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who, still as I then thought, laboured to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid."

We are quite sure, from the records of Bunyan's life and from the instances that he gives us of specific offences, that he took the very darkest view of his own spiritual condition, and that what appeared to him as terrible sin was often nothing more than the natural thoughtlessness and high spirits of youth. But he spoke according to his convictions, and the agony that he suffered was as real as if it had followed the blackest crime. All through his childhood his torments continued, but as he grew older "those terrible dreams did leave me, which also I soon forgot; for my pleasures did quickly cut off the remembrance of them as if they had never been, . . . so that until I came to the state of marriage, I was the very ringleader of all the youth that kept me company, in all manner of vice and ungodliness." With marriage came a change of life. "My mercy," says Bunyan, "was to light upon a wife whose father was counted godly. This woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be, not having so much household stuff as a dish or spoon between us both, yet this she had for her part, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*, which her father had left her when he died." In these she read with her husband, helping him to recover the lost knowledge of his schooldays, and holding up before him the example of her father, who had lived "a strict and holy life both in words and deeds." "Wherefore these books, with the relation, though they did not reach my heart to awaken it about my sad and sinful state, yet they did beget within me some desires to reform my vicious life and fall in very eagerly

with the religion of the times, to wit, to go to church twice a day, and that too with the foremost." From this merely formal religion he was soon driven. One day the sermon at church dealt with Sabbath-breaking, in which matter Bunyan was a great offender. A conviction of guilt came upon him, "but behold it lasted not, for before I had well dined, the trouble began to go off my mind, and my heart returned to its old course." "But the same day," he goes on, "as I was in the midst of a game of cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole, just as I was about to strike it a second time, a voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul, which said, 'Will thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?' At this I was put to an exceeding maze; wherefore, leaving my bat upon the ground, I looked up to heaven, and was as if I had with the eyes of my understanding seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if he did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for these and other ungodly practices." Conviction of sin was thus reawakened, and for years Bunyan was tormented with fear of God's wrath and of hell fire. Sometimes a little comfort came to him and he was able to lay hold on the promises of Holy Scripture; then again despair overwhelmed him and he felt that he was lost. One by one he gave up the sinful practices that he believed were keeping him from God—swearing, to which he tells us he was inordinately given; ringing the church bells, which seemed to him so great a sin that the thought that the steeple might fall upon him in punishment "did so continually shake my mind that I durst not stand at the steeple-door any longer, but was forced to flee"; and dancing, "I was full a year before I could quite leave that." Still he came no nearer to finding peace. "I was tossed between the devil and my own ignorance, and so perplexed, especially at some times, that I could not tell what to do." "Thus I continued for a time all on flame to be converted to Jesus Christ." "I was more loathsome in mine own eyes than a toad, and I thought I was so in God's eyes too."



John Bunyan
Thomas Sadler
Photo. W. A. Mansell & Co.

At last, with many falls, and groans of agony, and fresh beginnings, he came to a place of peace. "But because my former frights and anguish were very sore and deep, therefore it oft befell me still as it befalleth those that have been scared with fire. I thought every voice was Fire, Fire, every little touch would hurt my tender conscience."

The worst part of the spiritual conflict was over, but there was other discipline for John Bunyan before his faith could be perfected. He became a preacher, and was "indicted for an upholder and maintainer of unlawful assemblies and conventicles, and for not conforming to the national worship of the Church of England." For this "being delivered up to the jailer's hand, I was had home to prison, and there have lain now complete for twelve years." Here he found a great increase of spiritual content, and joy in the things of religion. "But notwithstanding these helps I found myself a man encompassed with infirmities; the parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place as pulling the flesh from the bones, and that not only because I am somewhat too fond of these great mercies, but also because I would have often brought to my mind the many hardships, miseries and wants that my poor family were like to meet with should I be taken from them." During this imprisonment Bunyan wrote three books, *Profitable Meditations*, a verse dialogue; *The Holy City*, which originated in a sermon which he preached to the other inmates of the jail one Sunday morning; and *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, the famous autobiography from which the quotations given in this chapter have been taken.

During his second imprisonment Bunyan began to write his book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Here again we note a great difference between the manner in which his work was evolved, and the long thought and careful preparation which went to the making of *Paradise Lost*. His own words, though put into verse which has in itself little merit, give a more lively and realistic account of the way in which the book originated than any commentator can hope to put together.

When at the first I took my pen in hand
Thus for to write, I did not understand
That I at all should make a little book
In such a mode: nay, I had undertook
To make another, which, when almost done,
Before I was aware, I this begun.

And thus it was: I, writing of the way
And race of saints in this our gospel-day,
Fell suddenly into an allegory
About their journey and the way to glory,
In more than twenty things which I set down.
This done, I twenty more had in my crown;
And they again began to multiply,
Like sparks that from the coals of fire do fly.
Nay then, thought I, if that you breed so fast,
I'll put you by yourselves, lest you at last
Should prove *ad infinitum*, and eat out
The book that I already am about.
Well, so I did; but yet I did not think
To show to all the world my pen and ink
In such a mode; I only thought to make
I knew not what: nor did I undertake
Thereby to please my neighbour; no, not I;
I did it my own self to gratify. . . .

Well when I had thus put mine ends together,
I showed them others that I might see whether
They would condemn them, or them justify;
And some said, Let them live; some, Let them die:
Some said, John, print it; others said, Not so:
Some said it might do good; others said, No.

Now was I in a strait, and did not see
Which was the best thing to be done by me:
At last I thought, Since ye are thus divided,
I print it will; and so the case decided.
For, thought I, some I see would have it done,
Though others in that channel do not run:
To prove, then, who advised for the best,
Thus I thought fit to put it to the test.

The test showed that Bunyan had done right in publishing his work. It is computed that one hundred thousand copies were sold in Bunyan's own lifetime. Nor was its literary influence confined to his own country. Three years after its publication, it was reprinted by the Puritan colony in America, there receiving, as Bunyan himself tells us, "much loving countenance." And there it has continued ever since, in an untold number of editions; and, with Shakespeare, it forms part of

the literary bond which unites the two English-speaking peoples on each side of the Atlantic. It was translated into Dutch, French and German, and these editions also were sold in large numbers.

The *Pilgrim's Progress* is written "in the similitude of a dream." "As I walked through the wilderness of this world," it begins, "I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream." The dream showed the passage of a man whose name was Christian, from the city of Destruction, along the narrow way and through the Valley of Humiliation and the Valley of the Shadow of Death to the Celestial City. All the difficulties which beset a man in his efforts to find salvation, the difficulties with which Bunyan himself had so manfully wrestled, are shown under the form of an allegory. Spenser had dealt with a similar subject, and had treated it allegorically; but *The Pilgrim's Progress* bears little likeness to the *Faerie Queene*. Its meaning is plain and unencumbered, and is consistent throughout; there is no shifting of the ground or confusing of the issues. Its scene, like that of *Paradise Lost*, includes earth, heaven and hell. But Bunyan does not attempt to frame a complete plan of the universe, or to transport his readers to vast illimitable regions such as give grandeur to the action of Milton's poem. His scenes are the common scenes of earth—mountains and valleys, rivers, precipices, miry roads, gardens and houses: each of these has a spiritual significance which is made clear in perfectly plain and definite fashion by the name which is given to it—the Slough of Despond, the Valley of Humiliation, the Delectable Mountains. His characters are labelled in the same way, so that when Obstinate, Pliable, Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Mr. Talkative or Mr. Greatheart makes his appearance, the reader knows at once how he is going to behave, and the nature of the part he will take in the action. Yet the names are so aptly fitted, the scenes and characters are introduced so naturally, the personified virtues and vices are so exactly like the ordinary men that one meets every day in real life, that the reader is never

either irritated or bored, but is interested in the story as a story although the moral is writ so large that one might well imagine it would allow no attention to be given to anything but itself.

The world as Bunyan sees it in his dream, is a town called the City of Destruction, which stands in the midst of a wide plain. Heaven is the celestial city, built upon a mighty hill in the country of Beulah, whose air is very sweet and pleasant, where the birds sing continually and every day the flowers appear on the earth and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. Its foundations are higher than the clouds, it is builded of pearls and precious stones, also the streets thereof are paved with gold. Before it flows the dark river of Death, and there is no bridge to go over and it is very deep. Hell lies between Heaven and Earth, in the Valley of the Shadow of Death; its mouth stands hard by the wayside, and ever and anon flame and smoke come out in abundance with sparks and hideous noises.

Perhaps the most remarkable and significant instance of the difference between the methods of Bunyan and Milton is their presentation of the Devil. Milton's Satan we have seen; here is Bunyan's. Apollyon, the 'foul fiend,' was hideous to behold: "He was clothed with scales like a fish (and they are his pride), he had wings like a dragon, and feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion." He fought with Christian in the Valley of Humiliation, and the sore combat lasted for above half a day. "In this combat no man can imagine unless he had seen and heard, as I did," says the dreamer, "what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight; he spake like a dragon. It was the dreadfullest sight that ever I saw." Apollyon, when he was vanquished, "spread forth his dragon wings and sped him away, that Christian for a season saw him no more."

This, as we call it now, is the vulgar conception of the devil; most of us have outgrown the belief which Bunyan held so fervently. To him Apollyon was a real being; he himself, in

his earlier days, had dreaded that the fiend might come in just such a form and carry him off. To Bunyan, Milton's Satan would have been unintelligible. He had not the sublimity of imagination which could dispense with outward and visible signs, and see in the careworn, dignified, and only less than noble figure that Milton presents, a more awful being than the most terrifying monster with horns and hoofs. Yet Bunyan possessed two qualities that Milton lacked, and these gave him a hold upon the hearts of common men, so that where Milton has one reader, Bunyan counts his by hundreds. He had, in the largest degree, that hearty human sympathy which was so conspicuously wanting in the other; and he had besides, though it was often obscured by his intense earnestness, the gift of humour. He drew men to him by the force of his personal qualities. "In countenance," one of his friends tells us, "he appeared to be of a stern and rough temper, but in his conversation mild and affable; not given to loquacity or to much discourse in company unless some urgent occasion required it: observing never to boast of himself or his parts but rather to seem low in his own eyes, and submit himself to the judgment of others; abhorring lying and swearing, being just, in all that lay in his power, to his word; not seeming to revenge injuries, loving to reconcile differences and make friendships with all. He had a sharp quick eye, with an excellent discerning of persons, being of good judgment and quick wit."

For twelve years after he was released from his second imprisonment, Bunyan lived peaceably and quietly in Bedford. The success of the first part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* had shown him his power as a writer and encouraged him to go on with this branch of his work. He revised Part I of his book, and made some notable additions to it. In 1680 he published *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, which forms a kind of companion picture to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, describing the downward career of a man wholly given over to evil. In 1682 was published Bunyan's second great allegory, *The Holy City*. In 1685 appeared the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It

describes the journey of Christian's wife, and her four children, to the celestial city, and is very far inferior both in interest and in style, to the first part.

Bunyan died in 1688, a few months before the Prince of Orange landed in England. He had ridden from Bedford to Reading on one of the errands of mediation which were common to his later years, and for which his peace-loving nature and the great weight which men of his own religious community attached to his opinion, made him especially fitted. He was riding home, by way of London, when a storm came on, and before he could find shelter he was wet through. He was in a weak state of health, the result of an attack of the 'sweating sickness' from which he had suffered in the previous year, and the chill which he sustained through this unfortunate accident brought on a fever. He reached the house of one of his London friends, and there, ten days later he died. He was buried in the famous burying-ground of the Dissenters at Bunhill Fields.

Bunyan left behind him, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a unique monument. The book can be read with interest and delight by children, by the unlearned and ignorant, by cultured men of the world and by great scholars. It is a religious work, written in an age that was bitterly controversial, yet there is in it no bitterness and no controversy; Nonconformists and Anglicans alike can read it without disagreement. It was written by a man who was almost entirely without education, whose library had consisted of the Bible, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, and a few popular religious treatises; and it challenges comparison with two of the greatest works in English literature —Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*—written by men who were both scholars and great literary artists. Yet the comparison shows that, as a religious work, it has had far greater influence than *Paradise Lost*, and, as an allegory, it is far nearer perfection than is the *Faerie Queene*.

BOOK TWO

The Augustan Age

THE reign of Queen Anne is the urban age of English literature. 'The town' absorbed the attention of the writers both of poetry and of prose. Dryden's fine and clear-cut style was brought to a still higher state of polished perfection, though some of its vigour was lost in the process. The grossness of the previous age was less apparent, though many great works were still disfigured by it. Political literature resulted from the disturbed condition of the country and the heated state of parties, and theological literature from the new theories concerning religion. No great work of the highest order was produced, but much that is worthy of attention by virtue of its concise and clear expression and its pleasant, easy flow of carefully thought-out ideas.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE TATLER : THE SPECTATOR

ON April 12, 1709, the numerous coffee-houses of Queen Anne's London were stirred by a small thrill of pleasant excitement. Copies of a new periodical, with the inviting and suggestive name of *The Tatler*, had that morning been distributed among them. The man of fashion had found one on his table at White's coffee-house when he sauntered in late in the afternoon for his cup of chocolate, and had noted with languid approbation that the paper promised "accounts of Gallantry and Pleasure." At Will's, the wits were making merry over the new paper. They commended highly the editor's choice of a pseudonym, for he appeared before his readers as Isaac Bickerstaff. The name was familiar to the whole town, since, about a year before, Jonathan Swift had used it in an attack on the almanack-makers who pretended to predict the events of the coming year. He had written a pamphlet in which he had gravely foretold the death of the most noted among them, Partridge by name, at 11 P.M. on March 29; and when that date had passed he had insisted, in spite of angry protests from Partridge, that the man really was dead—could not, in fact, by the laws of logic and reason, be alive. All the wits of the day had joined in keeping up the joke, and the town was kept in uproarious laughter for months. It had scarcely died away when *The Tatler* appeared with the name of the then famous astrologer on its title-page.

At the Grecian coffee-house lawyers and Templars wondered how far the promised articles on learning and literature would deserve serious attention. At Child's such of the clergy as were not so entirely given over to politics as to have

forgotten their proper duties, welcomed the announcement that the new paper would be on the side of morality. At Jonathan's and the less important coffee-houses of the capital, merchants and citizens speculated as to the probable reliability of the domestic and foreign news. The announcement that the paper was designed to supply reading for the 'fair sex' caused much amusement, and men went home to joke with their wives and daughters about the new means of entertainment offered to them. But to the thoughtful among all classes there was in the editor's address one sentence of special interest. "The general purpose of this Paper," said Isaac Bickerstaff, "is to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behaviour."

It was for the means of doing these things that the society of the day had for some time been vaguely seeking. The profligacy that had marked the Court of Charles II had, under the rule of William III and Queen Anne, passed into something more resembling decency of behaviour; but though men had grown somewhat ashamed of the excesses their fathers had practised, they had not learned to adapt their speech and manners to a much higher standard. Sobriety and decorum were still looked upon as the badge of a despised Puritanism, and fine gentlemen still drank, and swore, and diced, and made love to their neighbours' wives, not so much because they enjoyed doing so as because their reputations depended on their proficiency in these arts. Dress was still extravagant, and the fashions of the day in many cases ridiculous and unsightly. Men took their pleasures coarsely, and women had little to occupy them except frivolity.

The great mass of the middle class—the city merchants and small country squires—though they had been but slightly affected by the licentiousness of Court life, had suffered from the lack of inspiring examples and the general lowering of the standard of manners and conduct. It was this class, now grown rich and important and ambitious, that felt most

Sir Richard Steele 268

W. Holl

acutely its need of an ideal that would direct and enlighten its blundering efforts toward gentler manners, purer pleasures, more refined social intercourse, a more humane and kindly spirit in the business of life. *The Tatler* promised to do this; and if, to us, it seems absurd that a penny newspaper, published three times a week, should set out to effect what was little less than a complete revolution in manners and morals, we must remember the difference between those times and our own. The Press to-day works as a great whole, and no one paper can be said to exert a very marked influence; but, taken collectively, the effect of our periodical literature is enormous. In the days of *The Tatler* only a few comparatively feeble efforts had been made to use the great and powerful instrument which is now in such active operation, but these had revealed the fact that a mighty force was there only waiting for a skilled hand to make it effective. Add to this a public ready and eager to be influenced, and the highest hopes will not seem unjustifiable.

So thought Richard Steele, the man to whom *The Tatler* owed its existence. With a true instinct he had seized the right moment and the right means for the work he wished to do. He was no faultless hero or calm philosopher who, looking down on society from a serene height, formulated a plan for its regeneration. He was an impulsive, kind-hearted, reckless, improvident, lovable Irishman, whose fine impulses and lofty aspirations were continually being brought to nought by a pleasure-loving disposition and a lack of stern moral fibre. He had been educated at the Charterhouse and at Oxford, had left the University with discredit and enlisted as a trooper in the Guards. For this his father, a prosperous Irish attorney, had disinherited him. Steele remained in the army until he rose to the rank of captain, and made himself a noted figure among the wild gallants of the town. He lived extravagantly, was always in debt; he drank, and diced, and brawled in the taverns and coffee-houses. But he never lost his keen appreciation of all that was lofty and beautiful in human life, and he loved the ideal which he always saw shining in the distance before him,

though he never gathered up his strength in a real attempt to approach it. So, in the midst of his dissipations, he astonished the town by producing a little book called *The Christian Hero*, in which he tried to show that through the teaching of Christianity alone could man become a true hero and a true gentleman. It is a sincere and manly little book, full of the loftiest moral and religious sentiments; yet we cannot wonder that it brought upon Steele much ridicule—his theory and his practice were so entirely opposed the one to the other. Nothing daunted, he turned to another department of literature, and tried to reform the notoriously licentious drama by writing three comedies in which virtue instead of vice should be interesting and triumphant. He was not without power as a dramatist, but he allowed his moral purpose to overweight his story, and he replaced the brilliant wit of the Restoration comedy by an excessive sentimentality which tended to become insipid. So he gained little fame from his work for the theatre, though he gained some money, and that to impecunious, thriftless Dick Steele was a matter of considerable importance. But by 1708 all this money had gone, as well as the money which two successive marriages with rich heiresses had brought him. He was glad indeed to accept the post of gazetteer, or editor of the official news sheet *The London Gazette*, which was under the control of the Government, at a salary of £250 a year. It was this position which first suggested to him the idea of *The Tatler*. He had, through his position as gazetteer, almost a monopoly of official news, domestic and foreign, and it seemed to him that with this advantage he could produce a newspaper that would sell well, and so bring relief to his extremely distressed finances. It would also, he hoped, give him an opportunity of bringing forward, in a form in which they would reach just the class they were designed to benefit, those views on moral and social questions that were so dear to his heart. So with a sanguine spirit he started his work. From the first he addressed himself especially to the frequenters of the coffee-houses, for his knowledge of London life taught him that these really formed the centres of public

opinion. In his first number he wrote: "All accounts of Gallantry, Pleasure, and Entertainment, shall be under the article of White's Chocolate-House; Poetry under that of Will's Coffee-House; Learning under the title of Grecian; Foreign and Domestic News you will have from Saint James's Coffee-House; and what else I have to offer on any other subject shall be dated from my own apartment."

For a short time the original plan of *The Tatler* was adhered to with a fair degree of consistency; but soon the natural bent of the editor's mind began to influence and modify it. Less stress was laid upon news, and more upon the comments and reflections which it suggested, and the essays, originally only an unimportant element in the whole, became the leading feature. Steele, in the character of the old astrologer, discoursed freely to his readers on the various social questions of the day. He attacked the fashionable vices of gaming and drunkenness, the practice of duelling, and the unhealthy state of public opinion which caused a man to boast of his immorality and blush to be detected in an act of piety or sober virtue. He depreciated the wit which the age prized as one of the first qualities distinguishing a gentleman. A gentleman, said Steele, is one who is thoughtful of the feelings of others and would rather miss the opportunity for a brilliant repartee than humiliate or discomfit a fellow man; who can hold steadfastly to his opinions without offensively thrusting them in the faces of those who think differently; who is dignified without being self-assertive, and genial without being unduly familiar. Again and again, in successive numbers of *The Tatler* Steele placed this ideal before his readers. He touched, too, with a lighter hand, affectations of dress and manner, ridiculing "the order of the insipids" as he called the super-exquisite fine gentlemen, in merciless fashion. The fact that few of his readers knew who the editor of *The Tatler* was gave him confidence, and, as he said, when the time came for him to wish them farewell, "Mr. Bickerstaff was able to attack prevailing and fashionable vices with a freedom of spirit that would have lost both its beauty and efficacy had it been

pretended to by Mr. Steele." The character of Isaac Bickerstaff was developed as time went on. He was represented as an aged, solitary man, who, like the astrologers of an earlier time, lived surrounded by the mysterious instruments and appliances necessary to his art. He had a familiar spirit, named Pacolet, who was able to read men's thoughts and reveal to his master their secrets. This plan gave to Steele a wide range of subjects, for the astrologer through his own powers and those of his servant could bring all mankind under his observation; and in order to include womankind also in the survey, Steele, at an early stage of his venture, invented a lady editor, Jenny Distaff, half-sister to the astrologer. With her help *The Tatler* was made to extend its observations to things specially concerning women, and the articles which from time to time dealt with these were among the most interesting and characteristic to be found in the paper. At a time when women were thought of but lightly, when the false gallantry of the Restoration period had debased them in the public eye, when they were sneered at for devoting themselves to the frivolous and trifling occupations which were all that the custom of the time allowed them, Steele's chivalry was unfailing. He attempted neither gallantry nor satire; he discussed feminine failings and virtues in the same way as he had discussed those of men, as freely but more gently; and his fine compliment to Lady Elizabeth Hastings is an indirect compliment to all her sex—"To love her was a liberal education."

Not many numbers of *The Tatler* had appeared before Steele's intimate friends began to suspect who Isaac Bickerstaff really was. Number 5 revealed him to Joseph Addison. The two had been at the Charterhouse School and at Oxford together. Steele, in his impulsive fashion, had early formed an enthusiastic, worshipping attachment to the boy who, though exactly his own age, was so far beyond him in gravity, self-control and strength of purpose, as well as in scholarship. The two boys became friends, and Steele visited Addison in his home at Milston Rectory, in Wiltshire. After their college days Steele and Addison for some time saw little of each other.

Addison left the University with a reputation for scholarship especially for excellence in Latin verse. He became known to Dryden, and to other prominent men of letters. He published various translations and complimentary poems, and received in 1699, when he was twenty-seven years old, a pension from the Crown. He travelled on the Continent, and shortly after his return he wrote, at the request of the Ministry, the poem that established his fortune. This was *The Campaign*, which celebrated Marlborough's victory at Blenheim. It was extraordinarily popular, and Addison received from the government, as a reward, the post of Under-Secretary, and entered upon a political career.

When the first *Tatler* appeared Addison was in Ireland, where he had gone as Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. He was not in the secret of the new enterprise, but, as has been said, he speedily recognized Steele's hand in it. He offered to become a contributor to the paper, and his offer was very gladly accepted. The first article he sent (*Tatler*, No. 18) dealt with the conclusion of peace negotiations with France. It is in Addison's characteristic tone of delicate and playful irony. "There is another sort of gentleman," he says, after speaking of the soldiers who would now lose their employment, "whom I am much more concerned for, and that is the ingenious fraternity of which I have the honour to be an unworthy member; I mean the news-writers of Great Britain, whether Post-men or Post-boys or by what other name or title soever dignified or distinguished. The case of these gentlemen is, I think, more hard than that of the soldiers considering that they have taken more towns, and fought more battles. They have been upon parties and skirmishes when our armies have lain still, and given the general assault to many a place when the besiegers were quiet in their trenches. They have made us masters of several strong towns many weeks before our generals could do it, and completed victories when our greatest captains have been glad to come off with a drawn battle."

The influence of the new contributor to the paper was soon very strongly felt. "I have only one gentleman," Steele

said, in his preface to the collected edition of *The Tatler*, "who will be nameless, to thank for any frequent assistance to me, which indeed it would have been barbarous in him to have denied to one with whom he has lived in intimacy from childhood, considering the great ease with which he is able to dispatch the most entertaining pieces of this nature. This good office he performed with such force of genius, humour, wit and learning, that I fared like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid; I was undone by my own auxiliary; when I had once called him in I could not subsist without dependence on him." But in saying this Steele undervalues his own services to the paper in order to exalt those of his friend. To Steele belongs the credit of originating the ideas which Addison developed so successfully. He had greater initiative and greater daring than his friend, and was quicker to receive impressions from the world about him. In literary workmanship, however, he could not approach Addison, whose perfection of style becomes more marvellous the more closely one examines it. His delicate playful humour is like nothing else that literature can show, and in his clear, beautifully turned sentences there is such a suggestion of refinement and finish that the reader's mind is uplifted by the sound as well as by the sense of what he writes. One cannot imagine a coarse sentiment expressed in Addisonian English.

As the literary element in the paper became more and more prominent the news element receded into the background. It is probable that both Addison and Steele felt themselves hampered by the original plan, which was still supposed to guide them in their conduct of *The Tatler*, and more especially by the political principles which had been at first ardently professed. On January 2, 1711, the last number of *The Tatler* appeared. The reason given for its discontinuance was that since the public had discovered Richard Steele in Isaac Bickerstaff the working of the paper had become ineffective.

Two months passed; and then, on March 1, 1711, came the first number of a new paper, *The Spectator*, which Addison and Steele combined to make famous. It was published every day,

and each number dealt in the form of an essay with a single subject. Isaac Bickerstaff had disappeared, and "the Spectator" was installed in his place. In the first number this gentleman introduces himself. He is, he tells his readers, a country gentleman of good though not high birth, and of respectable though not great fortune. From his childhood he has been noted for a singular gravity of demeanour, and a taciturnity which has increased with his years. He is a scholar, and a man who has seen the world, both at home and abroad. He has lived for some years in London and has frequented all places of public resort, though he has taken no part in what he has seen going on. "I have acted," he says, "in all parts of my life as a looker-on, which is the character I intend to preserve in this paper."

This first number was written by Addison. In the second Steele described the other members of a club of which "the Spectator" was a member. The first of these is the famous Sir Roger de Coverley, a country gentleman, whose delightful simplicity of character and kindliness of heart have made him one of the best known and best loved among the heroes of fiction. There follow a gentleman of the Inner Temple whose name is not given; Sir Andrew Freeport, "a merchant of great eminence in the City of London;" Captain Sentry, "a gentleman of great courage, good understanding, but invincible modesty;" and "gallant Will Honeycomb," the elderly beau who is still a great man among the ladies, and can tell stories of the reigning belles of two generations. These, with a clergyman who is an occasional visitor, make up the club. The papers in which Mr. Spectator tells of the doings of himself and his friends are among the best of the whole series. At other times he discourses upon every variety of subject—social, literary, religious, philosophical. In the tenth number he tells what are his general aims in the conduct of the paper. "My publisher tells me that there are already three thousand of them distributed every day, so that if I allow twenty readers to every paper, which I look upon as a modest computation, I may reckon about three score thousand disciples in London

and Westminster, who I hope will take care to distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd and of their ignorant and unattentive brethren. Since I have raised to myself so great an audience, I shall spare no pains to make their instruction agreeable and their diversion useful. For which reasons I shall endeavour to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality, that my readers may, if possible, both ways find their account in the speculation of the day. It was said of Socrates that he brought philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses." He recommends, therefore, that in all well-regulated families where an hour is set apart every morning for tea and bread and butter, *The Spectator* shall be punctually served up, as part of the tea-equipage. "There are none," he goes on to say, "to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world. I have often thought there has not been sufficient pains taken in finding out proper employments and diversions for the fair ones. Their amusements seem contrived for them, rather as they are women, than as they are reasonable creatures, and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's or a toy-shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweetmeats. This, I say, is the state of ordinary women; though I know there are multitudes of those of a more elevated life and conversation, that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of the mind to the ornaments of dress, and inspire a kind of awe and respect, as well as love, into their male beholders. I hope to increase the number of these by publishing this daily paper, which I shall always endeavour to make

an innocent, if not an improving entertainment, and by that means at least divert the minds of my female readers from greater trifles. At the same time, as I would fain give some finishing touches to those which are already the most beautiful pieces of human nature, I shall endeavour to point out all those imperfections that are the blemishes, as well as those virtues which are the embellishments of the sex."

The means by which *The Spectator* attempted to accomplish the objects thus set forward were many and various. Great use was made of "the Club," and sometimes paper followed paper in which one or other of its members gave the Spectator his excuse for offering disquisitions on miscellaneous subjects. In the week which ended July 7, 1711, for example, five out of six of the papers were of this character. On Monday morning Addison told his readers how the Spectator visited Sir Roger de Coverley at his country house, and described the members of his household. On Tuesday Steele took up the story, and told of Sir Roger's relations with his servants—"the lower part of his family." On Wednesday Addison introduced his readers to Will Wimble, a friend of Sir Roger's, the younger son of an ancient family, who "being bred to no business and born to no estate," "has frittered away his time in trivialities, and put the real talents that he possesses to no useful purpose."

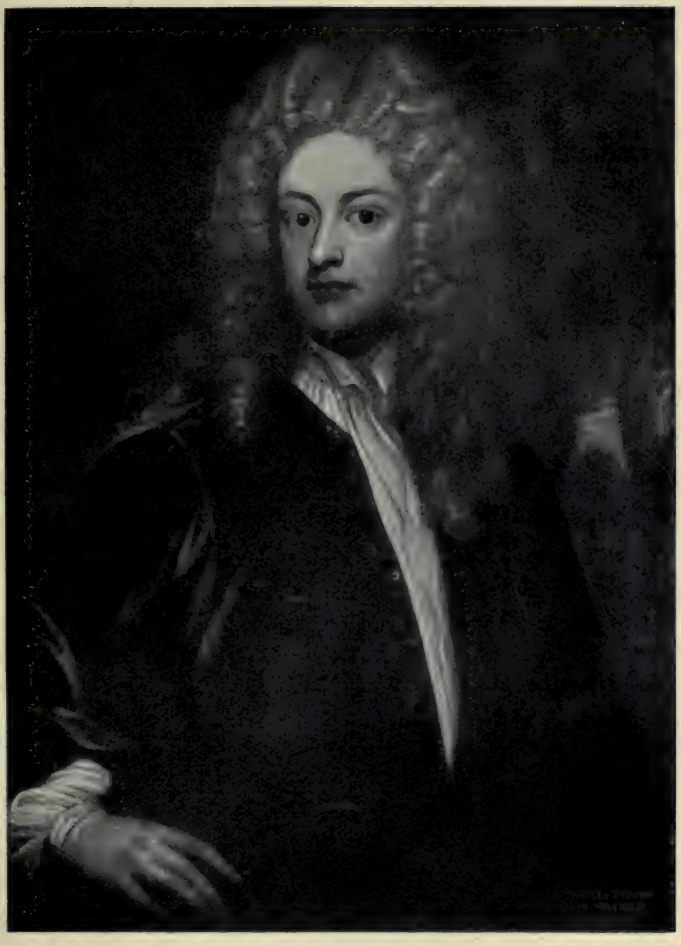
On Thursday Steele related how Sir Roger took the Spectator round his picture gallery and showed him the portraits of his ancestors, and incidentally the characteristics of a gentleman were discussed. Addison, it may be remarked, looked upon Sir Roger as his own creation, and was very jealous of his being touched by any other hand. It is not often that, as here, Steele is allowed to make the knight the subject of two almost successive papers; and after this he says no more about Sir Roger until a full year has gone by.

On Friday Addison resumed his account of Sir Roger at home, and told of a conversation between the knight and the Spectator on the subject of apparitions. It was the practice of the editors to give to their readers on Saturdays a "serious paper," that they might be put into a proper frame of mind

for the observance of their religious duties on Sunday. This particular Saturday brought an essay *On Immortality*, of which the main theme was "the progress of a finite spirit to perfection." So, for one day, the history of Sir Roger was interrupted, only to begin again on Monday with one of the most delightful of all the Coverley papers, *Sir Roger at Church.*

Sometimes a course of papers on the same subject was continued throughout the week. During the week that ended May 12, 1711, for example, Addison wrote six successive papers on *True and False Wit*, which are among his finest critical efforts. But this was exceptional, and the week that followed (May 14–19) is far more typical. On Monday Steele discoursed on *Fashions in Mourning*, showing how these had been at first natural and reasonable, but had degenerated into unmeaning formalism. Tuesday brought another paper by Steele, in which he took up the subject of wit, dealt with by Addison a few days before, and "followed it to the playhouse," showing how it was exhibited in the comedies of the day. He ridiculed especially Etherege's *The Man of Mode*, which was very popular at the time. Sir Fopling Flutter, the hero, whom the fashionable world had agreed to regard as a model of good breeding, he declared to be "a direct knave in his designs and a clown in his language." All the readers of *The Spectator* were laughing that morning at the admired Sir Fopling, and he lost for ever the proud eminence to which he had attained.

Wednesday morning brought a paper written by John Hughes, one of the occasional contributors who helped Addison and Steele in their work. Hughes was a writer of some reputation, and a friend of Pope's. His subject was the education of young girls, and he wrote his paper in the form of letters, a device very common in *The Spectator*. Many letters were received from correspondents, and where these were suitable they were used. But letters were also obtained from other sources. The very natural and affecting love-letter from a footman that forms No. 71 of *The Spectator* was written by a servant of the Hon. Ed. Wortley, to whom it was given in mistake for one of his own. When the footman asked for its



Joseph Addison 278

Sir Godfrey Kneller

Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

return, the master answered, "No, James, you shall be a great man and the letter must appear in *The Spectator*." It is said, too, that Steele in one paper used some of his own love-letters. Sometimes, however, the letters were pure fabrications, written in the same way as any other part of the paper. Such were—to return to John Hughes—the two letters which were read at many breakfast tables on Wednesday morning, May 16, 1711. The first was signed "Celimène," and professed to come from a lady who desired the Spectator's advice as to what she should do with a country girl lately come to town, pretty, but awkward and unformed. "Help me," said Celimène, "to make her comprehend the visible graces of speech and the dumb eloquence of motion." The other letter was written by a man and dealt with the same subject from the opposite point of view. "I who am a rough man, am afraid the young girl is in a fair way to be spoilt; therefore, Mr. Spectator, let us have your opinion of this fine thing called fine breeding; for I am afraid it differs too much from the plain thing called good breeding." "The Spectator" took the opportunity these letters gave him of attacking the usual system of female education as being showy and worthless.

On Thursday morning appeared a letter (whether real or fictitious does not appear) from a tradesman, who told how he went to a dance with his eldest daughter and was shocked at the immodest and familiar manners of the dancers. He described the two dances *Hunt the Squirrel* and *Moll Pately*, both of which offended his sense of decorum. The Spectator sympathised with the outraged father, and pictured how his horror would have been increased had some of the popular "kissing dances" been included in the programme.

The remaining two papers of the week were contributed by Addison. On Friday he gave his readers an essay on *Friendship*. He quoted from various writers on the subject and commented on these. He added: "If I were to give my opinion upon such an exhausted subject, I should join to these other qualifications a certain equability or evenness of behaviour. . . . It is very unlucky for a man to be entangled in friendship with one,

who by these changes and vicissitudes of humour is sometimes amiable, and sometimes odious; and as most men are at some times in an admirable frame and disposition of mind, it should be one of the greatest tasks of wisdom to keep ourselves well when we are so and never to go out of that which is the agreeable part of our character." This is very characteristic of the sweet-tempered, placid Addison.

Saturday brought a paper on *British Commerce*, prefixed by a long quotation from Virgil and a longer one from Dryden. "There is no place in the town," says Addison, "which I so much love to frequent as the Royal Exchange. It gives me a secret satisfaction, and in some measure gratifies my vanity, as I am an Englishman, to see so rich an assembly of countrymen and foreigners consulting together upon the private business of mankind, and making the metropolis a kind of emporium for the whole earth." And he goes on to discourse upon the benefits of commerce and the importance of merchants to the community, finishing with a finely imaginative paragraph in which he pictures one of our old kings standing in person where he is represented in effigy, and looking down upon the wealthy concourse of people with which that place is every day filled.

The most famous of the "Saturday papers" are those in which Addison criticises *Paradise Lost*. These were begun in the early part of 1712, and were continued during eighteen weeks. They are very valuable critical exercises, although in them Addison regards Milton's great work from a point of view which differs considerably from that taken by more modern critics. But he helped his age to appreciate, in some measure, a style of literature immeasurably above the artificial and over-elaborated works of their own day, and in so doing he rendered it a great service.

Addison's early expressed hope that his paper might form an indispensable part of the breakfast equipage in every reading household, came, as time went on, very near being realized, and some of the letters published in *The Spectator* illustrate this very amusingly. "Mr. Spectator," writes a lady who calls

herself "Leonora," "your paper is part of my tea-equipage, and my servant knows my humour so well that, calling for my breakfast this morning (it being past my usual hour) she answered *The Spectator* was not yet come in, but the tea-kettle boiled, and she expected it every moment."

When, in August 1712, a Government tax was imposed upon periodicals, and the price of *The Spectator* was, in consequence, raised from a penny to twopence, it might reasonably have been feared that its circulation would suffer; but the effect was only slight and temporary. Addison wrote a paper upon the imposition of the tax in his usual inimitable style. "This is the day," he said, "on which many eminent authors will publish their last words. . . . A facetious friend of mine, who loves a pun, calls this present mortality among authors *the fall of the leaf*."

It was in the nature of things, however, that such a paper as *The Spectator* could not go on indefinitely. Its charm consisted in its freshness and variety, in the lightness of touch which permitted it to deal with almost every department of social life. But as the enterprise grew somewhat stale to its originators, there came a perceptible falling off in these qualities. The later numbers of *The Spectator* are more serious in tone and not so uniformly excellent in style as the earlier ones. Both editors began to think that it was time to stop, and with its 555th number, on December 6, 1712, the career of *The Spectator* was brought to an end.

The subsequent careers of Addison and Steele may be briefly told. A new paper, *The Guardian*, succeeded *The Spectator*, but failed to keep itself free from political entanglements and soon came to an end. It was followed by a violently partisan paper *The Englishman*, edited by Steele alone, but this, too, was unsuccessful. Addison turned from periodical literature to the theatre, and in 1713 produced his tragedy, *Cato*, which was received with enthusiasm by the critics of England and of France, but has not sustained its reputation. In 1716 he married the Dowager Countess of Warwick, and henceforward gave most of his attention to politics. An unfortunate

quarrel took place between him and his old friend Richard Steele, who was opposed to him in political opinions. Addison died in 1719, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Steele, by his espousal of the Hanoverian cause won the favour of George I, was given various small offices, entered Parliament, and was knighted. He wrote one more comedy, *The Conscious Lovers*, and various political pamphlets. He died in 1729.

CHAPTER XXX

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK : THE ESSAY ON MAN

IN the number of *The Spectator* which appeared on the morning of December 20, 1711, there appeared a review of a new poem called an *Essay upon Criticism*. On the whole the reviewer spoke very highly of the work, though he noted as blots some venomous reference to contemporary writers which it contained. The author of the poem was the sickly, misshapen boy, whom we have seen gazing with fervent hero-worship at the burly figure of old John Dryden seated in his armchair at Will's coffee-house. The boy had grown into a young man of twenty-three, but he was still sickly, still undersized and crooked of figure, still filled with a restless eager ambition to be great in the world of letters and make his name famous. His home was still at Binfield with the father and mother, now growing old, who adored him and whom he tenderly loved ; but he made frequent visits to London, where by favour of the old dramatist, Wycherley, he was introduced into the society of many of the famous wits of the day. But he had apparently never met Addison or Steele, and the favourable review of his poem was prompted by no personal feeling. Pope, always eager for praise, was overjoyed at obtaining such recognition from what was then regarded as the highest critical authority. He wrote a letter to Steele thanking him in the most heartfelt terms. Steele replied that Addison, not he, was the writer of the article, and promised to introduce Pope to the great man at the earliest opportunity. Accordingly, Pope betook himself one evening to Button's coffee-house, and saw there, surrounded by a little group of admiring

friends, the mild and kindly literary dictator, who ruled his little company by means of a gentle urbanity which was, however, as potent as the more robust methods of Ben Jonson and Dryden had ever been. It is not to be expected that Pope would feel very much at home among this little group made up of the staff of *The Spectator*. His nature was not a sociable one; he was capable of sincere and faithful friendship, but his restless egotism and uneasy consciousness of his own physical defects disqualified him for general society. He professed a great admiration for Addison, and wrote a prologue to the great man's *Cato* when it was produced about two years later. He wrote, also, one or two papers for *The Spectator* and for its successor, *The Guardian*, but his irritable vanity took offence at the scant notice which *The Spectator* gave to some *Pastorals* which he published, and there ensued between him and the Addisonian group a coolness, though no actual rupture took place.

By this time—for the relations between the two writers did not reach the stage to which we have brought them until 1714—Pope had raised himself to a position in the world of literature only second to that of Addison himself. After many experiments he had discovered just the class of subject and style of treatment suited to his particular genius; and this he had done through a trifling incident in which he originally, had no concern. A quarrel, that threatened to become serious, had arisen between two Roman Catholic families. Lord Petre had, in a youthful frolic, cut a lock of hair from the head of Miss Arabella Fermor. This familiarity was highly resented by the lady and her family, and the entire circle to which the parties concerned belonged was thrown into a lively state of commotion. Pope was not personally familiar with either of the families, but he knew some of their friends, and one of these suggested to him that a reconciliation might be brought about by means of a poem in which the affair should be treated in a playful manner, and so placed in its proper light as a mere outcome of high spirits and youthful audacity. Pope took up the notion at once, and set to work

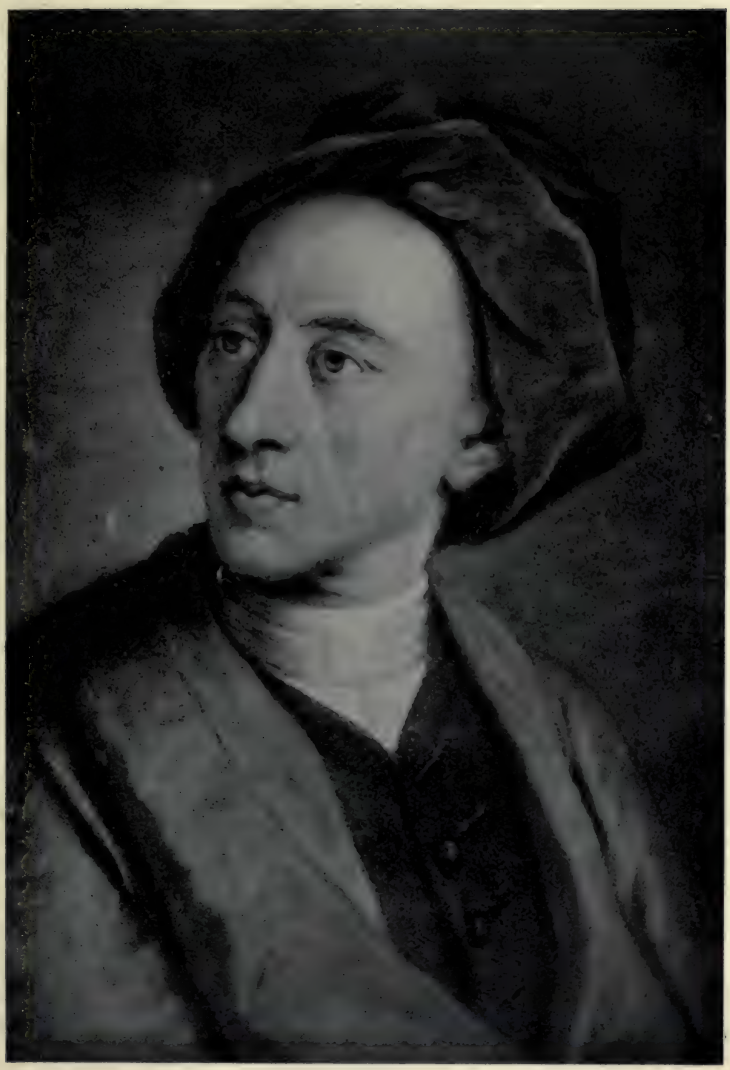
The style was suggested by a recently published poem of Boileau, the great French literary critic, whom the English poets of Queen Anne's day regarded as their one authority. This poem, called *Le Lutrin*, dealt in mock heroic style with a quarrel between the canons of the Sainte Chapelle as to whereabouts in the church the lectern should be placed. In a similar mock-heroic vein Pope wrote of *The Rape of the Lock;* and he produced a brilliant specimen of society verse, whose exquisite finish and clear-cut perfection of form, show, in the happiest manner, Pope's characteristic excellence. It did not, unfortunately, achieve the object for which it was written. The lady was inclined to be offended at the freedom with which her private affairs had been treated, and this in spite of the praises lavished upon her beauty, her wit, and her sway over the hearts of men. But she accepted a copy of the verses, and gave permission to the poet to publish them in *Lintot's Miscellany* (1712). This brought a chorus of praise from all the critics, and Pope, in the exhilaration of the success which was to him the best thing that life could offer, conceived a means by which he could, as he believed, add to the value of his poem. The inspiration, in this case also, came from France, by means of a book, *Le Comte de Gabalis*, which Pope had lately read. This book set forward what was known as the Rosicrucian theory, which supposed an invisible army of gnomes and elves to guide and superintend the actions of mortals on the earth. This invisible machinery Pope designed to introduce into his poem. He imparted his plan to Addison who shook his head. The poem as it stood, he said, was "a delicious little trifle"; best leave it alone. But Pope was enamoured of his idea, and could not give it up. He re-wrote *The Rape of the Lock*, and set his fairy creation at work; and the result was a brilliant success. Pope for ever after harboured a grudge against Addison. He believed that jealousy had prompted the advice given to him; that the famous writer foresaw the triumph which would follow the adoption of the suggested device, and feared for his own supremacy. The suspicion was perfectly groundless, and could only have arisen

in a mind which, like Pope's, was hopelessly distorted by inordinate ambition. But to him it was as a patent and fully proved fact.

The Rape of the Lock in its amended form, appeared in 1714, and at once took the place, which it has held ever since, as first in the class to which it belongs—the class of light, witty, drawing-room verse. "*The Rape of the Lock*," says Hazlitt, "is the most exquisite piece of filigree work ever invented. It is made of gauze and silver spangles. The most glittering appearance is given to everything, to paste, pomatum, *billets-doux*, and patches. Airs, languid airs, breathe around; the atmosphere is perfumed with affectation. A toilet is described with the solemnity of an altar raised to the goddess of vanity, and the history of a silver bodkin is given with all the pomp of heraldry. No pains are spared, no profusion of ornament, no splendour of poetic diction to set off the meanest things. . . . It is the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of foppery and folly. It is the perfection of the mock-heroic."

Pope's light touch did not fail him throughout, and *The Rape of the Lock*, written when he was only twenty-six years old, is by some critics considered to be his masterpiece.

Pope's career during the next sixteen years may be very briefly sketched. Nearly ten years were spent in the translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which proved very successful, and brought the poet the independence toward which from the beginning, he had worked. In 1728 came *The Dunciad*, a coarse and venomous but supremely clever satire on the minor poets of the day, especially such as had been unlucky enough to incur Pope's easily aroused enmity. During the whole of this period his quarrel with the Addisonian group of writers had become more and more pronounced, and he had formed a close friendship with Swift, who belonged to the opposite political party. In 1716 he removed, with his father and mother, to Chiswick, and upon the death of his father two years later, he bought the Twickenham villa which was his home during the remainder of his life. (We take up the story in 1730.)



Alexander Pope

Photo. Mansell & Co.

Pope's Twickenham villa stood in one of the loveliest of the pleasant districts that border the Thames. It had a garden of about five acres, which, Horace Walpole tells us, Pope had "twisted and twirled and rhymed and harmonized, till it appeared two or three sweet little lawns, opening and opening beyond one another, and the whole surrounded with impenetrable woods." Pope dearly loved his little estate, and found infinite amusement in "twisting and twirling" it into the shape that pleased his fancy. His crowning achievement was his famous grotto, an underground passage which led from the main part of his grounds to a lawn which lay on the other side of the high road, and sloped down to the river. The grotto was arranged in the most ingenious fashion, with mirrors placed at various angles, fragments of glittering spar, and curiosities which friends who knew his hobby sent him from various parts of the country. The villa was within easy reach of the great world. Hampton Court, Richmond and Kew, which during the reigns of George I and George II were so often occupied by the Court, were all in its neighbourhood; and London itself was not so very far off and could be reached by way of the river, as well as by road. At home Pope had, until 1733, the society of the mother whom he tenderly loved. In some of the most beautiful lines he ever wrote he speaks of the filial offices which during this part of his life, so often engaged him:

> Me, let the tender office long engage,
> To rock the cradle of reposing age,
> With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
> Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
> Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
> And keep awhile one parent from the sky!

He had also many visitors, more, indeed, than he desired. He was by this time a famous man, and an object of interest to all lion-hunters:

> What walks can guard me, or what shades can hide?
> They pierce my thickets, through my grot they glide,
> By land, by water, they renew the charge,
> They stop the chariot and they board the barge.
> No place is sacred, not the church is free,
> Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath day to me.

There is no doubt that Pope enjoyed the sense of importance which this notoriety brought him, though the inroads which his visitors made upon his time was really a serious matter. Pope took his vocation as a writer very seriously, and much of his success was due to that "infinite capacity for taking pains," which has been said to be the one essential of genius. His weakness of body made him incapable of sustained effort, and all that he did was done in the brief snatches of time during which he found it possible to combat successfully the languor and weariness that constantly beset him. The amount of work he accomplished is astonishing; and the valiant struggle made by his brilliant intellect against the disabilities imposed by his poor, sickly body compels our admiration. We forgive him for its sake, the peevish, waspish temper which made him so many enemies and we refrain to speak harshly even of the crooked, underhand ways by which he, like many other weak and timid creatures, sought to gain an advantage over those with whom nature had dealt more kindly.

Throughout his life it was Pope's habit to attach himself to some one who was stronger and more fitted to meet the buffets of the world than he himself was. The story of his friendships is almost as long as the story of his enmities. In this there was doubtless something of genuine, disinterested hero-worship, mixed with a desire to gain shelter behind a stronger personality. The most enthusiastic and the least interested of these attachments was the one he formed during the period of his life at which we have now arrived. Its object was Lord Bolingbroke, the brilliant but discredited Tory Minister of Queen Anne. During the last years of the queen's reign, when Swift had been on terms of the closest intimacy with the great men of the State, he had introduced Pope to Bolingbroke—then Mr. St. John. Since that time Bolingbroke had passed nearly ten years in exile, but had returned to England in 1724, and settled at Dawley, near Uxbridge, which is within an easy drive of Twickenham. The acquaintance with Pope was renewed, and there followed a friendship to which the poet owed the inspiration for the work by which he is best known—the *Essay*

on Man. Bolingbroke visited Twickenham, and sat in the famous grotto :

> There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl
> The feast of reason and the flow of soul ;

and Pope braved the dangers of the road between his beloved villa and Dawley in order to return the visit. Bolingbroke seems to have sincerely loved and admired the irritable and difficult-tempered poet, " I have known him," he said years afterward to Spence, when Pope lay dying, " these thirty years, and value myself more for that man's love than ——" He could say no more for tears. Pope looked on Bolingbroke with almost reverential admiration. " It looks," he said to a friend, " as if that great man had been placed here by mistake. . . . When the comet appeared a month or two ago I sometimes fancied it might be come to carry him home, as a coach comes to one's door for other visitors." But no such brilliant exit from the scene was prepared for the fallen minister, and for ten years he lived, almost unnoticed, at Dawley. Failing active occupation, he turned to the study of philosophy, and persuaded himself that he had become a master in that art when he had read some half-dozen of the best-known works upon the subject. The knowledge he had thus gained he proceeded to impart to Pope, urging him to the composition of a great philosophical work in verse. As early as 1725, if we may trust a reference made in a letter to Swift of that date, the work was under consideration. We may imagine the two brilliant friends playing at country life, among haycocks and poultry, and grottos and vines, and writing between-whiles their great philosophic masterpiece. Bolingbroke read, expounded, and argued, Pope with the marvellous quickness which enabled him to seize upon an idea and utilize it without making any real study of the facts on which it was based, selected the material needed for his purpose, and proceeded to put it into verse. He scribbled down his couplets in their rough form on the backs of envelopes, or on any odd scraps of paper that came to hand. " Paper-sparing Pope," Swift calls him,—

Now backs of letters, though design'd
For those who more will need 'em,
Are fill'd with hints and interlined
Himself can scarcely read 'em.

Each atom by some other struck
All turns and motions tries:
Till in a lump together stuck
Behold a poem rise!

But there was much to be done to the "lump together stuck" before it was given to the world as a finished product. No writer ever laboured at the polishing of his verse more strenuously than did Pope. "Pope," says Dr. Johnson, "was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do his best; he did not court the candour, but dared the judgment of his reader, and expecting no indulgence from others, he showed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven. For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them." He kept the *Essay on Man*, as it seems, for eight years. The first part was published early in 1733, the other three during 1733 and 1734, in the form of epistles addressed to Lord Bolingbroke.

Milton, in the introductory lines of *Paradise Lost* had proclaimed that his aim was to

Assert eternal Providence
And justify the ways of God to men.

Pope borrows this phrase:

Let us, (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die,)
Expatiate free o'er all the scene of Man,
A mighty maze! but not without a plan; . . .
Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can;
And vindicate the ways of God to Man.

Milton attempted to attain his end by showing that man had brought his doom of misery and death upon himself, in spite of the efforts of a loving Father to preserve him from it. Pope proposed to prove, by philosophic arguments, the justice of

God's dealings with his people in the ages that followed the fall of man, and especially to reconcile the existence of evil and misery in the world with the rule of an all-powerful and all-loving God. But in this, as might have been foreseen, he failed. Such a work demanded a large grasp, a deep insight, an all-embracing sympathy, none of which qualities Pope possessed. Moreover, he was not, as we have seen, learned in the philosophy he professed to expound. "Metaphysical morality was to him a new study," says Dr. Johnson, "he was proud of his acquisitions, and, supposing himself master of great secrets, was in haste to teach what he had not learned." It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the poem is full of inconsistencies and contradictions, and that no definite theory with regard to the plan on which the universe is governed can be gathered from it. Yet, in spite of these things, the *Essay on Man* is a notable work. Nowhere is Pope's special gift of neat, concise, striking expression shown to better advantage; in no other work has he given us couplets more exquisitely turned or more brilliantly polished. Some of these have passed into proverbs, because men have recognized in them a felicitous expression of a common truth. Such, for example, are:

> Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
> Man never is, but always to be blest.
>
> And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.
>
> Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
> The rest is all but leather or prunella.
>
> Never elated, while one man's oppressed;
> Never dejected whilst another's blessed.

In some of the illustrative passages the beauty of the thought is equal to the beauty of the language. That which describes the poor Indian's conception of a life to come will always be remembered if only for the appeal to common, human feeling so finely made in the last two lines:

> But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
> His faithful dog shall bear him company.

The poem quickly became popular, but it involved Pope in difficulties which he had by no means foreseen. It was

translated into French and had a ready sale on the Continent. Learned divines and professors of philosophy hastened to bring their heavy battery of learning against the flimsy structure which Pope had built upon an insecure foundation. They accused him of heterodoxy and even of atheism, and poor Pope was dreadfully alarmed. His religious belief was, perhaps, vaguely defined and loosely held; but he had refused to renounce the faith in which he had been brought up, when by doing so he might have gained worldly advancement, and is therefore entitled to be credited with a sincere conviction of its truth. Moreover, he had set out to champion the cause of religion, and to be accused of attacking it was specially humiliating. Bolingbroke had returned to the Continent, and Pope was left alone to weather the storm which burst upon him. Luckily a champion arose from an unexpected quarter. William Warburton, afterward Bishop of Gloucester, took up his cause, and wrote a book to prove that Pope had spoken "truth uniformly throughout." Pope's gratitude was extreme, and he formed with Warburton one of those close, admiring friendships which have before been noticed as characteristic of his temper.

Ten years more of life remained to Pope, and during that time he produced some of his finest short poems—the *Epistles* and the *Satires*. He still lived at Twickenham, still received his friends and visited at the houses of great men. But it was with more and more effort that his "crazy carcase," as one of his enemies had, in his early years called his frail body, could be made to answer the demands which he made upon it. His health gradually failed, and at last asthma and dropsy put an end to his life, in May 1744. He was sincerely mourned by the friends he had loved, Spence, and Warburton and Bolingbroke, and the other members of his intimate circle. He has taken his place as one of our great English poets; and though we may find in his character little to love and much to blame, yet much must be forgiven to a man who, in spite of terrible physical drawbacks, has left us such a legacy of polished and finely wrought verse.

CHAPTER XXXI

ROBINSON CRUSOE

DURING the year 1712 there was much talk in the coffee-houses and clubs of London concerning the adventures of a Scotch sailor, Alexander Selkirk, who had been put ashore by his captain on the desert island of Juan Fernandez, and had lived there for four years (1705–1709) quite alone. He had been rescued by Captain Rogers, who had brought him back to England in 1711. Reports of Selkirk's adventures at once began to circulate in London, and the story was fully told in Captain Rogers's book *A Cruising Voyage round the World*, published in 1712. Richard Steele, with his quick, human sympathy, was one of the first to be attracted by the account. He saw, moreover, the chance of a telling article in *The Englishman*, which he was then editing. He sought out Alexander Selkirk and obtained from his mouth an account of his experiences. This appeared in the number of *The Englishman* issued December 3, 1712. *The Englishman*, we know, did not appear upon the breakfast-table of every middle-class home with the same certainty and regularity that *The Spectator* had done. Yet it reached many of them, and at these, we may be sure, the conversation turned mainly upon the surprising experiences of the lonely mariner whose story it contained. There was one house, situated in the pleasant rural village of Stoke Newington—a large, handsome dwelling-place, with stables, coach-house and beautifully kept gardens—where we may feel certain the paper made its appearance ; for its master was a keen politician and an active journalist who made it his business to hear all that was being said upon the topics of the day. We can picture him as he

came downstairs on that cold December morning—a spare elderly man, with a brown complexion, a hooked nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes and a large mole near his mouth. He wore the luxuriant, flowing wig with which the portraits of Addison, Steele, Swift and other notabilities of the reign of Queen Anne have made us familiar. He was neatly and carefully dressed, and his clothes were a trifle gayer in colour and a trifle richer in material than might have been expected from a gentleman of the middle class, who was approaching the end of his fifty-third year. His movements were quick and energetic, though his hands were somewhat swollen with gout; his keen, restless glance showed an eager interest in all the circumstances of the life around him. At the breakfast table with him sat his wife and his "three lovely daughters, who were admired for their beauty, their education and their prudent conduct"; perhaps, also, one or more of his three sons, who were, however, at this time out in the world making careers for themselves. There was much lively talk and laughter over the breakfast table; but the master of the house managed, with it all, to find out something of the contents of the little pile of papers that lay before him. He saw at once the possibilities of the story of Alexander Selkirk, and when he rose from the breakfast table we may imagine that he secured the paper, which had probably been going the round of the party, carried it away with him to the room upstairs where he did his work, and put it carefully away for future use. For nearly seven years it lay there undisturbed, but nevertheless it proved to be the germ of one of the most famous of the world's classics. For the spare elderly man was Daniel Defoe, and the hint which he gained from the life of Alexander Selkirk he developed into *Robinson Crusoe.*

In 1712, however, he had no time for the writing of fiction. He was a man who always had many irons in the fire, and the story of his long and strenuous career is almost bewildering by reason of the manifold activities, extraordinary vicissitudes and swift changes of front that it records. He was the son of a butcher of Cripplegate, and was designed by his parents for the

Frontispiece to the First Edition of "Robinson Crusoe"

Presbyterian ministry. But he disappointed their expectations, and became a hosier in Cornhill, whose business made it necessary for him to spend various periods abroad, in Spain, and probably, also in Germany, Italy and France. He took a share in Monmouth's rebellion in 1685, and joined the army of William III in 1688. He became an enthusiastic politician, and a prominent figure of the London dissenting body. In 1692 he failed in business for £17,000, and four years later we find him managing a tile factory near Tilbury. He began his literary career by a satire in verse, written in 1691, and from that time forward he produced with astounding rapidity pamphlets, verse, political tracts, and journalistic matter of every description. In 1703 he was arrested for writing a tract called *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, was sentenced to stand three times in the pillory, and to be imprisoned in Newgate during the Queen's pleasure. He was released at the end of a year and founded a newspaper called *The Review*, which dealt mainly with political topics. This paper he carried on for nine years, almost single-handed. He was employed by the Government in secret service, and served in this way five different administrations. His rides over England as an election agent for Harley in 1704 and 1705 are famous. To give any account here of his literary activity would be impossible. No public event occurred but he was ready to take advantage of it with a tract, a set of verses, a realistic narrative or a moral discourse. The amazing fertility of his brain is demonstrated more and more fully as modern research brings to light fresh examples of his work.

Defoe's education had not been of the kind which alone was valued in the days of Queen Anne. He had received no classical training, and had never been a student of either University. He was educated at a school at Stoke Newington, kept by a famous dissenting preacher, Charles Morton. All the rest of his really remarkable store of knowledge he seems to have picked up by his own efforts in after life. The great writers of his day despised him as a low-born ignorant scribbler. "An illiterate fellow whose name I forget," is the way in which

he is referred to by Swift. Defoe fiercely resented this attitude of his contemporaries. In one of his journalistic sketches he attempts to vindicate his claim to the title of scholar. "I remember," he says," an Author in the World some years ago, who was generally upbraided with Ignorance, and called an 'Illiterate Fellow' by some of the *Beau Monde* of the last age." Then having given in detail an account of some of the attainments of his despised Author, he sums up: "This put me wondering, ever so long ago, what this *strange Thing* called a Man of Learning *was*, and what is it that constitutes a *Scholar?* For, *said I*, here's a man speaks five languages, and reads the Sixth, is a master of Astronomy, Geography, History, and abundance of other useful knowledge (which I do not mention, that you may not guess at the Man, who is too Modest to desire it), and yet, they say, *this Man is no Scholar.*"

At the time when we have imagined him reading *The Englishman* in the house he had lately bought at Stoke Newington, he had just returned from Scotland, which he had visited in the interests of the political party that desired to secure the Hanoverian succession. He had involved himself in difficulties with the opposition party, and was in danger, as he knew, of prosecution for treason. With this hanging over his head he was still taking an active interest in the war with France and writing tracts advocating an honourable peace, was planning the issue of a new trade journal, *The Mercator*, and was busily employed in the service of the Government. It is no wonder that Alexander Selkirk had to wait for a more convenient season.

But when the treason charge had been settled by a few days' imprisonment in 1713; when the Peace of Utrecht had been signed; when the troubles of 1715 were safely over and George I securely seated on the English throne, then Defoe managed to find some spare minutes for miscellaneous writing. In 1718 accounts of a band of famous pirates who had become a terror to mariners on the high seas, reached England, and revived the interest, that Englishmen are at all times ready to give to strange adventures in far-away regions of the earth.

Defoe, always acutely conscious of the state of public opinion, and skilled in profiting by it, bethought himself of Alexander Selkirk. He sat down to write a narrative founded on the experiences of the Scotch sailor, in the methodical businesslike manner that long practice in writing had made natural to him, and with no higher ambition than that of producing a workmanlike, saleable composition. If he had done nothing further than this his name, in spite of the mass of literature which stands to his credit, would, to-day, have been almost forgotten.

But, as he wrote, a power which had lain dormant within him during all his busy years, was aroused, and came forward to guide his fluent pen. The subject was one exactly suited to his peculiar abilities. He possessed, to a wonderful degree, the art of investing his descriptions with an air of reality by means of circumstantial details applied with apparent artlessness. His keen practical nature delighted in overcoming just such apparently insuperable difficulties as those which confronted the hero of this story. His journalistic experience taught him how to place his points tellingly, so that the interest of the reader was never allowed to flag. All these qualities, however, he had shown in previous, and was to show in subsequent, writings. Something over and above these went to the making of *Robinson Crusoe.*

It is not necessary here to give any account of a story which is familiar to every boy and girl. A few of the ways in which Defoe improved upon the original narrative may, however, be pointed out. He cast his hero upon the desert island by means of a shipwreck, thus giving himself an opportunity for a wonderful piece of descriptive writing, and reserved the actual incident of a man being put ashore by his captain for a later stage of his story. He extended the period of exile from four to twenty-eight years. He expanded the hints given in the narrative of Alexander Selkirk into a full and circumstantial account of the ingenious methods by means of which *Robinson Crusoe* provided for all his daily necessities. He added exciting descriptions of attacks by savages and cannibalistic feasts to give variety to what might otherwise

have been in danger of proving a monotonous narrative; and he introduced into his account of the departure from the island various exciting incidents which brought the narrative to an effective close.

Thus, almost as it were by accident, the great English classic came into being. It had an immediate and remarkable success. Encouraged by this, Defoe wrote in four months *The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.* But the inspiration under which he had worked had deserted him, and this second part is comparatively tame. Nor did he, in the various works of fiction that he produced during the remaining eleven years of his life, ever attain to the height he had reached in *Robinson Crusoe.*

A book which Defoe published in 1720, and which is now scarcely ever read, gives a curious and somewhat interesting explanation of his great work. Robinson Crusoe is, he tells us, an allegory of his own life. But it seems probable that this was an afterthought suggested by his ingenious brain, to forestall any charge of inconsistency which might have been brought against him by critics who read a proposition which he had put forward with regard to the morality of writing a purely fictitious story. "This supplying a story by invention," he had said, "is certainly a most scandalous crime, and yet very little regarded in that part. It is a sort of lying that makes a great hole in the heart, in which by degrees a habit of lying enters in. Such a man comes quickly up to a total disregarding the truth of what he says, looking upon it as a trifle, a thing of no import, whether any story he tells be true or not." These are strange words to come from the man who was one of the most important of the progenitors of the modern novel, and Defoe, as we have said, tried to cover the inconsistency by representing his work as a story which is "the beautiful representation of a life of unexampled misfortunes, and of a variety not to be met with in this world." In its variety Defoe's life might certainly be compared to that of his hero:

> No man hath tasted differing fortunes more,
> For thirteen times have I been rich and poor.

The shipwreck which occurred twenty-eight years before the date when the story ends may possibly be taken to symbolize Defoe's bankruptcy which took place twenty-eight years before *Robinson Crusoe* was written. But it is useless to attempt to pursue the allegory further, and the *Serious Reflections* are only valuable as giving us a glimpse into the workings of a mind made subtle and casuistical by long practice in the less worthy arts of political controversy.

Defoe died in 1731, and was buried in the Dissenters' burying ground of Bunhill fields. In his own day he was generally regarded as a dangerous and not too scrupulous political agent. A succeeding age exalted him into a great writer and a martyr to the Nonconformist cause. To-day we are content to think of him as the author of *Robinson Crusoe*.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE JOURNAL TO STELLA: GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

IN the opening year of the reign of William III, Sir William Temple, the statesman who is known to history as the author of the Triple Alliance, retired to his estate of Moor Park, in Surrey, there to spend the remainder of his life. The household over which he ruled had something of a patriarchal character. There was Lady Temple, lovable and charming as when, thirty years before, she had written the delightful love-letters that are read with such interest to-day. There was Lady Giffard, Temple's sister; and there was Lady Giffard's companion, or waiting-maid, Mrs. Johnson, with her two little daughters. There was Rebecca Dingley, a girl whose connexion with the family is not quite clear. There was a raw Irish lad, Jonathan Swift, a distant relation of Lady Temple, who acted as Sir William's secretary for 'twenty pounds a year and his board'; and there was Jonathan's 'little parson cousin,' Tom, who was the household chaplain.

The life of a dependent in a great household is never without its drawbacks, and in the seventeenth century those drawbacks were probably even more serious than they are to-day. Sir William was kind and just, always courteous and dignified, but never familiar to the subordinate members of his household. We know that the thought of his displeasure struck terror into the heart of his moody, sensitive secretary. In after days he recalled how he "used to be in pain when Sir W. Temple would look cold and out of humour for three or four days, and used to suspect a hundred reasons." The uncouth

manners of the Irish lad and the haughty irritable temper which was not entirely hidden even under the wholesome awe that Sir William's attainments and reputation imposed upon him, made him no very pleasant companion. The members of the household who sat with him at the second table thought him awkward and unpleasing. They sneered at his fierce pride and laughed at his ungainly figure; but they took care that he should not hear them sneer or laugh, for not one of them could stand before the glance of his eyes, so strangely and vividly blue, as they looked out under their black brows, darting fire.

There was one person in the household who neither looked down on Swift nor feared him. This was little Esther Johnson, the youngest daughter of Lady Giffard's waiting-maid. When Swift came to Moor Park she was eight years old, a bright, merry child with large dark eyes and a lovely face. She was the darling of the household, and for her the social distinctions that vexed the others did not exist. Lady Temple and Lady Giffard petted and indulged her, and even dignified Sir William unbent when the little maid tried her pretty blandishments upon him. The servants adored and spoilt her, her mother and sister looked on with pride as they saw the whole house at her feet. But Jonathan Swift speedily became her chief ally. He taught her to write, and as she grew up he directed her reading, supplying her with books from Sir William's fine library. They roamed about the grounds, which were the glory of Moor Park and Sir William's great pride and occupation. Both of them admired with all their hearts the trim walks, the stiff, quaintly shaped flower beds, the canal which ran across the grounds, straight as art could make it. Little Esther found that the awkward moody lad made a splendid playfellow, when he was away from unsympathetic eyes and ears. She learnt to love and admire him, and to defer unquestioningly to his opinions on all subjects. Her affection touched his proud and lonely heart, and her girlish deference soothed the irritation which the circumstances of his position continually excited. So began the famous friendship that, almost as

much as his works, has caused the name of Swift to be held in remembrance.

With one or two short periods of absence, during the longest of which he was ordained deacon, and then priest, Swift remained at Moor Park until the death of Sir William Temple in 1699. He studied in the famous library, reading especially classical and historical works. Temple, as he came to recognize the exceptional ability of his secretary, entrusted him with tasks of increasing importance, and Swift gained much by contact with the trained man of affairs, who had known what it was to guide the destinies of a Kingdom. Temple's style in writing—that 'gentlemanly' style that Charles Lamb so admired, Swift did not imitate. He wrote many verses, none of any special merit, and showed in them the qualities which were to distinguish his later work—a marked ability to say the exact thing he wanted to say in the clearest, most unmistakable language. In 1697 he wrote *The Battle of the Books*, in connexion with a discussion then occupying many men of learning as to the relative merits of ancient and modern authors.

When Temple died he left his secretary a hundred pounds, and the right to publish the works he left in manuscript, the profits of which might perhaps amount to another two hundred. He had also obtained for Swift a promise of advancement in the Church from William III. Thus far had Swift advanced by the time he had reached his thirty-third year.

Esther Johnson was now "one of the most beautiful, graceful, and agreeable young women in London. Her hair was blacker than a raven, and every feature of her face in perfection." The affectionate intimacy between the two had grown closer with the years. Swift had carefully trained his pupil to regard love, in the ordinary sense of the word as an unreasonable and uncertain passion, far below friendship in its highest form, which was the relationship that he wished to exist between them.

William III's promise to Temple was not fulfilled, and Swift was obliged to seek diligently for some post by means of which he might earn his bread. He obtained at last in 1701

the small living of Laracor, a village about twenty miles from Dublin. Here, a few months afterward, came Rebecca Dingley and Esther Johnson. Sir William had left Esther a small property, and Swift persuaded her that her modest income would go further in Ireland than in England.

During the next ten years Swift paid several visits to London, and became known to some of the great men of the day, but his headquarters were at Laracor. In 1710, however, the Tories came into power. They were anxious to enlist upon their side a writer of conspicuous ability whose services would balance those that Addison rendered to the Whigs, and they tried very hard to bring Swift (who was known as the author of many political pamphlets and several longer works, including the famous *Tale of a Tub*) over to their side. The efforts they made were, in the end, successful. Swift was disgusted with his treatment by the Whigs, with whom he disagreed on many points. He left Laracor in charge of a curate, settled himself in London, and entered on a political career. Swift was now forty-two years old. The awkward Irish lad had grown tall and stately, the moody countenance had taken on an imperious expression, the azure blue eyes could still beam softly or glower terribly, at the will of their owner. He had a charm of manner which, when he chose to exert it, made him a delightful companion, and gained for him the sincere friendship of men and women, gentle and simple alike. His strange story is full of examples of the remarkable and sometimes tragical results which followed from the fascination he exercised on those around him. But in general his manner was brusque and overbearing, often even positively rude. The contempt and distaste with which he regarded mankind, considered as a mass, are plainly visible in his behaviour, and though he was capable of the warmest attachment to individuals, that did not make him despise the less 'the animal called man.'

But at this period when life was so full of interest and activity the dark unhappy thoughts which were wont to torment him left him for a time at peace. His nature required that the

great powers he possessed should be kept in full and active employment; otherwise his mental state became morbid and unhealthy. Political activity he specially loved. He delighted in feeling that he had penetrated to the very centre of the nation's business, and exercised upon it a guiding and controlling power; and he was not above the more vulgar satisfaction which comes from flaunting one's own importance before the eyes of one's fellows. Both these feelings were soon to be amply gratified.

His breach with the Whigs became final, and overtures from the Tory leaders followed. "To-day," he wrote to Esther Johnson, on October 4, 1710, "I was brought privately to Mr. Harley, who received me with the greatest respect and kindness imaginable; he appointed me an hour on Saturday at four, afternoon, when I will open my business to him." On Saturday "he spoke so many things of personal kindness and esteem for me, that I am inclined half to believe what some friends have told me, that he would do everything to bring me over." By October 16 Swift had 'gone over.' "I suppose," he wrote, "I have said enough in this and a former letter how I stand with the new people; ten times better than ever I did with the old; forty times more caressed. I am to dine tomorrow at Mr. Harley's; and if he continues as he has begun, no man has ever been better treated by another." Swift responded to these overtures by throwing all his energies into his efforts to serve the Government. He wrote pamphlets, and he used all the influence which his powerful personality and his growing reputation gave him, in the interests of his new friends. In February 1711 there came a check. Harley offered him a £50 note, which was refused with great indignation. Swift disdained to be treated as a hireling—as Defoe, for instance, who was at this time in Harley's pay, was treated. Harley was obliged to sue humbly for pardon, but for ten days Swift refused to be pacified. "If we let these great ministers pretend too much," he wrote to Esther Johnson, "there will be no governing them." At last he consented to a reconciliation, and Harley, in return, admitted him to the 'Saturday

dinners' at which only those belonging to the inner circle of the Government were to be seen. Swift was greatly elated, but behaved with his usual arrogance. "Lord Rivers was got there before me," he told Stella, "and I chid him for presuming to come on a day when only Lord Keeper, the Secretary, and I were to be there; but he regarded me not; so we all dined together. . . . They call me nothing but Jonathan; and I said, I believed they would leave me Jonathan as they found me, and that I never knew a ministry do anything for those whom they make companions of their pleasures; and I believe you will find it so; but I care not."

It is probable, however, that Swift did care, and that he was even then beginning to chafe at his reward being so long delayed. He would not accept a fifty-pound note, but he would willingly have accepted a bishopric or other high office in the Church. But as vacancies occurred they were filled by lesser men, and Swift was passed over. His friends flattered him by saying he could not be spared from London, but they knew the real reason was the Queen's doubts of his orthodoxy in religion.

The most famous political tract written by Swift at this time was *The Conduct of the Allies*, which is said to have been instrumental in bringing about the Peace of Utrecht. It raised Swift to a position of the highest importance. Dukes sued for his friendship, and a crowd of applicants besieged him with entreaties that he would use his influence to obtain for them places and pensions. All this pleased Swift mightily, and he lorded it over less favoured men in undisguised elation. "When I came to the antechamber to wait before prayers," wrote Bishop Kennet, in 1713, "Dr. Swift was the principal man of talk and business, and acted as minister of requests. He was soliciting the Earl of Arran to speak to his brother, the Duke of Ormond, to get a chaplain's place established in the garrison of Hull, for Mr. Fiddes, a clergyman of that neighbourhood, who had lateley been in jail, and published sermons to pay fees. He was promising Mr. Thorold to undertake with my Lord Treasurer that according to his petition he should obtain a salary of £200 per annum, as Minister of the English

Church at Rotterdam. He stopped F. Gwynne, Esq., going in with the red bag to the queen, and told him aloud he had something to say to him from my Lord Treasurer. He talked with the son of Dr. Davenant, to be sent abroad, and took out his pocket-book, and wrote down several things as memoranda, to do for him. . . . Then he instructed a young nobleman that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope (a Papist) who had begun a translation of Homer into English, for which, he said, he must have them all subscribe. "For," says he, "the author *shall not* begin to print till *I have* a thousand guineas for him."

Such was Swift in his full-blown glory. But there was another side to his life even during this period of triumph. He went home from brilliant assemblies where he had scolded Duchesses and instructed the finest gallants of the day how they should behave; from jaunts to Windsor with Cabinet Ministers as his companions; from dinners with the 'Brotherhood' Club, where the greatest men of the day met for talk and good fellowship—to his modest lodging in St. James's Street. There, after picking off the coals with which his Irish servant, Patrick, had unnecessarily piled the fire—for the parsimonious habits of his earlier days still clung to him, and, indeed, money was, even now, not too plentiful—he got into bed; and sitting up, with the fur-trimmed nightcap presented to him by Rebecca Dingley upon his head, he wrote the delightful journal-letters to Esther Johnson, or Stella, as he called her, which tell us most of what we know of his life at this period. He tells how Patrick has been misbehaving, and how the bill for coals and candles sometimes comes to three shillings a week; how that morning he had had an attack of the giddiness and sickness which he dreaded so much, and how a visitor had come and sat with him two hours and drunk a pint of ale that cost him fivepence; how there was a coldness between him and Mr. Addison for political reasons, and how he had dined with Mr. Secretary St. John, on condition he might choose his company. He teases Stella about her bad spelling, her losses at cards, the fine company she keeps. He inquires tenderly

Jonathan Swift 306

Charles Jervas

Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

about her ailments and bids her save her 'precious eyes,' which are inclined to weakness, by letting Dingley read the letter to her and write the answer. He uses the endearing "little language" which was probably a survival from the childish days at Moor Park. Stella is Ppt—which means Poppet; Swift himself is Pdfr—perhaps poor dear foolish rogue; M D is "my dear," and sometimes stands for Stella, sometimes for Stella and Dingley both. "I assure oo," he writes, "it im vely late now; but zis goes to-morrow; and I must have time to converse with my own deerichar M D. Nite de deer Sollahs, Rove Pdfr." His political friends would probably have had some difficulty in identifying him as the author of letters such as these.

But there was one subject on which Swift did not write to Stella with perfect openness. He did not tell her how large a part a certain Mrs. Vanhomrigh and her two daughters were beginning to take in his daily life. He mentions the occasions when he dines there, but he does not say how many hours he idled away in the comfortable homely parlour of 'Neighbour Van,' and how he had taken up once more his old office of tutor—this time to another Esther, Esther Vanhomrigh, to whom he gave the name of Vanessa. Nor does he tell what great attraction the young girl is beginning to have for him, and how she hangs upon his words in just the same way that the other Esther did in the old days at Moor Park. He persuades himself that there is no need to tell all this, that a man may surely have two friends, though he may only have one wife; that Esther is a dear child, but Stella, his old friend, is dearer still, and nothing can shake his allegiance to her. All this is very likely true; yet he knows in his heart that his action is not in accordance with the proud ideal of sincerity and uprightness which he has always held, and which he has taught both his pupils to hold also.

In June 1713 Swift at last obtained promotion, but it was not the promotion he had hoped for. He was appointed to the deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin, and after the defeat of the Tory party in 1714, he took up his residence there. "You are to understand," he wrote to Bolingbroke, "that I live in

the corner of a vast, unfurnished house ; my family consists of a steward, a groom, a helper, in the stable, a footman, and an old maid, who are all at board wages, and when I do not dine abroad or make an entertainment (which last is very rare), I eat a mutton pie and drink half a pint of wine ; my amusements are defending my small dominions against the archbishop, and endeavouring to reduce my rebellious choir." This change from his busy triumphant life in London weighed heavily on Swift's spirits. "I live a country life in town," he said, "see nobody, and go every day once to prayers, and hope in a few months to grow as stupid as the present situation of affairs will require." Stella and Rebecca Dingley lived near the deanery, and Swift saw them constantly. But the relations between the two were not as perfect as in the old days. Each still loved the other, and tried to act as though nothing was changed. But each was conscious of a difference, and this consciousness made their daily intercourse uneasy and strained. Swift knew that he had not been perfectly loyal to the woman whose life he had so long dominated. He owed it to her at least, that the friendship he offered her, and which was to serve her in place of the love she might have received from another man, should be staunch and flawless. The knowledge that he had failed in this obvious duty made the daily intercourse which had once been his delight, a painful pleasure. Rumours of the 'Vanessa' episode had perhaps reached Stella, though she gave no sign. Time might have brought back the old happy freedom if the two had been left undisturbed. But, in 1715 Esther Vanhomrigh came to Ireland. Her mother was dead, and the property which she had left to her daughters was situated near Dublin. This was the ostensible reason for Esther and her sister settling at Cellbridge, a few miles from the capital ; but the passion which Esther (who knew nothing of the existence of Stella) had conceived for Swift supplied a more powerful motive. Swift's teaching, in her case, had been in vain. Esther could not, as Stella had done, stifle her feelings, and accept her master's dictum that friendship was superior to the unreason-

able and fleeting passion called love. A meeting between the two Esthers might any day take place; and Swift had the misery of feeling that both the women who loved him were unhappy and might be still unhappier through his fault.

He tried conscientiously to put his heart into the duties of his office. He was zealous, as he always had been, for the honour of the Church. He improved the cathedral services, and saw that the building was kept in good condition. To the poor he appeared in the character most natural to him, that of a benevolent though terrifying despot. Parsimonious as he was, his almsgiving had always been on a royal scale, and now while the housekeeping at the deanery was carried on in a manner which shocked the liberal notions of the Irish gentry, large sums were regularly bestowed upon the poor old women in the by-streets of Dublin who knew the Dean and blessed him. If some of those whom he relieved were offended by his summary methods and his overbearing ways, there were not wanting those who appreciated his biting humour, and years afterward men told stories they had heard from their fathers and mothers about the sayings and doings of 'the Dane.'

But there were many hours which these occupations failed to fill. There were long lonely evenings during which Swift sat in his library, haunted by bitter memories and racked with present cares. He felt that his tormented brain could bear no more, and that madness threatened him. It was probably purely as a means of diverting his thoughts that he began a new work. During the winter of 1713–14, the last which he had spent in London, Swift had joined an association of writers, known as the Scriblerus Club. Pope, Gay and Arbuthnot were the other prominent members. The object of the club was the production of a satire, which was to be the joint work of all its members. The plan was never carried out, but each member seems to have done something toward fulfilling his part, and it is probable that the idea of his greatest work—*Gulliver's Travels*—first occurred to Swift in connexion with this scheme. This was the work to which he turned when he could bear the loneliness and silence of the Deanery no longer.

We do not know exactly when it was begun, but in a letter written to Vanessa in 1722 there is a reference to the second part of the work, some portion of which must therefore have been written before that time. It was written slowly. Sometimes Swift seems to have left it altogether, for weeks, and even months. During its progress he probably read *Robinson Crusoe*, for Defoe's work, we know, speedily reached Ireland, and this may have given him some hints and stimulated his activity.

He begins his work, as Defoe had begun *Robinson Crusoe*, with a grave and circumstantial account of the descent, parentage, and early life of his hero, but he brings him far more quickly to the island where his adventures are to take place. Lemuel Gulliver, like Robinson Crusoe, is the sole survivor from a wreck in which the rest of those on board perish; but unlike Robinson Crusoe, he reaches not a desert, but a thickly populated island. In the description of the tiny beings, not six inches high, that inhabit it, Swift satirizes the human race. He removes, as it were, the magnifying glass through which men habitually behold their own affairs, and he shows these in their real insignificance and triviality. The account which Reldresal, Secretary of State for Lilliput, gives of the affairs of the country is really a satire upon the political and religious feuds of England at the time when *Gulliver's Travels* was written. "For," says Reldresal, "as flourishing a condition as we may appear to be in to foreigners, we labour under two mighty evils; a violent faction at home, and the danger of an invasion by a most potent enemy from abroad. As to the first, you are to understand that, for above seventy moons past, there have been two struggling parties in this empire, under the names of Tramecksan and Slamecksan, from the high and low heels of their shoes, by which they distinguish themselves. It is alleged, indeed, that the high heels are most agreeable to our ancient constitution; but, however this be, his Majesty hath determined to make use of only low heels in the administration of the government, and all offices in the gift of the crown, as you cannot but observe. . . . The animosities

between these two parties run so high that they will neither eat nor drink nor talk with each other. . . . Now, in the midst of these intestine disquiets, we are threatened with an invasion from the island of Blefuscu, which is the other great empire of the universe, almost as large and powerful as this of his Majesty. . . . It began upon the following occasion: It is allowed on all hands that the primitive way of breaking eggs before we eat them was upon the larger end; but his present Majesty's grandfather, while he was a boy, going to eat an egg and breaking it according to the ancient practice, happened to cut one of his fingers. Whereupon the Emperor, his father, published an edict, commanding all his subjects, upon great penalties, to break the smaller end of their eggs. The people so highly resented this law, that our histories tell us, there have been six rebellions raised on that account; wherein one Emperor lost his life, and another his crown. These civil commotions were constantly fomented by the monarchs of Blefuscu; and when they were quelled, the exiles always fled for refuge to that empire. It is computed that eleven thousand persons have at several times suffered death rather than submit to break their eggs at the smaller end. . . . Now the Big-endian exiles have found so much credit in the Emperor of Blefuscu's Court and so much private assistance and encouragement from their party here at home, that a bloody war hath been carried on between the two empires for six-and-thirty moons, with various success."

But the book is not merely a political satire. It may indeed be read simply as a delightful story of wonderful adventures, and is no more dependent for its interest upon its underlying political allegory than is *Robinson Crusoe* upon the moral teaching which Defoe declared was its primary purpose. *A Voyage to Lilliput* delights the imagination of the child and at the same time satisfies the keen intellectual tastes of the scholar. It is full of a characteristic humour which does not as in some of Swift's works, tend to become coarse or savage. The King of Lilliput, who was "taller by almost the breadth of my nail, than any of his court," the officers who searched Gulliver and

described his watch as "a wonderful kind of engine" which they conjectured to be "either some unknown animal or the God that he worshipped"; the fine court ladies who visited him in their coaches and were driven round his table, to which a movable rim, five inches high had been fixed to prevent accidents; all these play their parts with a gravity and reasonableness which, in such tiny creatures, is irresistibly mirth-provoking and delightful.

The second book of *Gulliver's Travels* tells of the voyage to Brobdingnag, a country peopled with giants who seemed "as tall as an ordinary spire-steeple." Here the grass in the fields was twenty feet high, and the corn forty feet, the rats were the size of a large mastiff, the wasps as big as partridges, and the larks nine times as large as a full-grown turkey. The satire in this book is more general, and the writer attempts to show how petty and ignoble many of our social prejudices and time-honoured customs would appear in the eyes of a race whose conceptions were larger and loftier than our own. The King of Brobdingnag often amused himself by asking Gulliver questions concerning his country and his people. His interest in the race of pigmies, represented by this strange visitor to his land, was strong enough to make him wish for a full and detailed account of their manners and customs. After this had been given "in five audiences, each of several hours," the king summed up his impressions. "By what I have gathered from your own relation," he said, "and the answers I have with much pains wringed and extorted from you, I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

It was, perhaps, soon after the *Voyage to Brobdingnag* was finished that a public event drew Swift from the retirement in which, for ten years, he had lived. A patent had been given to a man named Wood for the manufacture of copper coins—popularly known as Wood's Halfpence—to be circulated in Ireland. Swift opposed the contract, and wrote against it his famous *Drapiers Letters* (1724). These, for a time,

brought him again into prominence, and his hopes of preferment in England revived. In 1726 he came to England and endeavoured to push his cause. But once more he failed to obtain anything more substantial than flattery and promises. Disgusted and embittered he returned to his Irish deanery.

The peculiar hatred of mankind, which, in spite of all his splendid charity and his strong attachments to individuals, had always marked Swift's relations with his fellows, had now grown into an overmastering passion of loathing and contempt. "I heartily hate and detest that animal called man," he had written to Pope, in 1725, "although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth." When, in his lonely and silent house, he sat down to finish *Gulliver's Travels*, this feeling was strong upon him. Age and weakness were causing the strong control which his will had exercised upon his passions to become relaxed. Sorrow of the worst kind had visited him; Vanessa was dead, as he could not but believe, of a broken heart, through his fault; Stella, the being he had always loved best in the world, was dying. The intense agony of his mind was hastening the oncoming of the terrible mental malady whose approach he had, through many terrible years awaited with shuddering horror. It is therefore, perhaps, scarcely surprising to find that the last two books of *Gulliver's Travels* —*A Voyage to Laputa*, and *A Voyage to the Houyhnhnms*—are altogether lacking in the charm which the previous part of the book possesses. They are savage attacks upon the human race, painful to read, and almost impossible to discuss. They are the product of a diseased mind, and bear about them the marks of disease, along with the unmistakable marks of genius. The Laputans, so absorbed in profitless studies that they had no attention to spare for the common duties and moralities of life; the people of Lagado, who spent their lives in such vain projects as attempting to extract sunshine from cucumbers; the spirits of the dead; the courtiers of Luggnagg, who approached their king crawling upon their stomachs and licking the dust of the floor; the Struldbrugs, or immortals, doomed after the age of four score to pass countless ages in the lowest

state of senile decay, hated and despised by all, and longing vainly for death to end their misery; and, worst of all the Yahoos, the loathsome, bestial caricatures of man, who lived in subjection to the wise and noble Houyhnhnms, or horses—all these show the utter and savage contempt which Swift felt for his fellow men.

In January 1728 Stella died, and on the night of her death Swift wrote down some of his recollections of the woman he had loved so long. The hopeless agony of spirit that he felt is shown plainly in the brief bald sentences wrung from his sad heart. He could love deeply, though after a selfish fashion, and could grieve truly and faithfully for the one he loved. But grief only served to make his temper more fierce and savage. *Gulliver's Travels*, published in 1726, had spread his fame throughout Europe, but he showed little gratification at tributes from the race he despised so heartily. He alienated many of his friends by his harsh and imperious temper, and gathered round himself a company of sycophants who bore his savage outbreaks for the sake of the gifts to be obtained through his lordly munificence. Side by side with this munificence grew the miserliness which made him stint himself, his household and his guests in a manner which rendered social intercourse difficult and almost impossible. His bodily health declined and his fits of overpowering melancholy became more and more frequent. The activity of a brain incapable of sustained effort drove him to the production of a great deal of worthless literature, consisting mainly of puns, riddles, acrostics and the grimmest of jokes. Some of his friends remained faithful throughout this dreary period, and occasionally there came flashes of the old genius lighting the way. But, taken as a whole, the years which followed Stella's death were years of gradual but steady decay. The mental disease crept on, gaining ever more and more ground until, in 1741, Swift was declared incapable of managing his own affairs and was placed under control. Four years of this death in life followed, until in October 1745 the end came, and the great, but unhappy genius, Jonathan Swift, died, quietly and painlessly, like a child.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE SEASONS

THE literature of the Augustan age was a literature of the town. Some of its writers were men actively concerned in affairs of State, and working for political as well as for literary rewards; some were, or aspired to be, men of fashion, dashing gallants who cut a fine figure at St. James's. For them the miracle through which the street-dwellers of Elizabeth's day had learnt how to sing of fields and flowers and quiet country skies was not repeated. These men of a later age were townsmen, while Shakespeare and his great company were simply town-dwellers. The interest of the Augustan writers was mainly concentrated upon man as a member of an urban society, and from this point of view they described him and his surroundings with the nicest exactitude. They knew man as the coffee-houses and clubs and playhouses saw him, they knew his follies and absurdities, his fashionable vices and his unfashionable virtues; and in smoothly polished brilliant lines they told of what they knew. But they seldom ventured beyond the narrow region thus marked out, and, consequently, their readers cannot fail to feel that, in spite of the finished excellence of style and expression, their limitations are too marked to allow of their works being classed as really the greatest literature.

One such limitation must at once strike all those who come to the study of the Augustan writers after reading the works of our earlier poets. That close and loving familiarity with Nature which, from the days when our far-off ancestors wrote *Beowulf*, had marked English poetry, has gone. Where is the

"Sweet May morning" of which Chaucer and his fellows were used to sing? Hear how Swift sees it:

> Now hardly here and there a hackney coach
> Appearing, show'd the ruddy morn's approach.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The slip-shod 'prentice from his master's door
> Had pared the dirt, and sprinkled round the floor.
> Now Moll had whirl'd her mop with dext'rous airs,
> Prepared to scrub the entry and the stairs.
> The youth with broomy stumps began to trace
> The kennel's edge, where wheels had worn the place.
> The small-coal man was heard with cadence deep,
> Till drown'd in shriller notes of chimney-sweep:
> Duns at his lordship's gate began to meet;
> And brickdust Moll had scream'd through half the street.

Where are the "daisies pied and violets blue, and lady's-smocks all silver white," which "paint with delight" the meadows in which Shakespeare bids us wander? The only flowers for which the Arch-poet of the Augustan age cared were those which were planted in neat rows round the trim lawns at Twickenham—from which paradise such common flowers as daisies and violets and lady's-smocks were, doubtless, strictly excluded. The Spectator went down with Sir Roger de Coverley into the country and sent us never a word about fragrant hayfields, or running streams, or lambs at play in the meadows. The most rural object that he noted was a walk of tall and aged elms which the vulgar supposed to be haunted, and a cow which a frightened footman took to be a ghost.

But the time was coming, though it was not yet within sight, when all this would be changed, and men would once more deem the sights and sounds of the country better worth recording than the trivial happenings of the town. Signs of the coming change were not wanting. In the same year that *Gulliver's Travels* took the town by storm, a poem in blank verse, called *Winter* made a quiet and unnoticed appearance. Few people heard of it, and fewer still read it until, as Dr. Johnson tells us, "by accident, Mr. Whately, a man not wholly unknown among authors, happening to turn his eye upon it, was so delighted that he ran from place to place, celebrating its excellence." Attention being thus drawn to

the work, inquiries began to be made concerning the author—James Thomson, as appeared from the title-page. Thomson was found to be a young Scotsman, twenty-six years of age, who had lately come from his native county of Roxburgh to seek his fortune in London. He was the son of a minister of the Scottish Church, and through the kindness of one of his father's friends had received a good education, first at the school of Jedburgh, and afterward at Edinburgh University. His parents had designed him for a minister, but his own tendency had always been toward literature, and he had decided that he would become a poet. With his poem, *Winter*, in his pocket, he had come to London. For this poem a bookseller (for booksellers were, in those days, usually publishers as well) had at last agreed to give the small sum of three pounds. Thomson was suffering from the extreme pinch of poverty when the critical insight of Mr. Whately brought him into public notice.

A few readers were found to agree with this enthusiastic gentleman, and gradually *Winter* crept toward fame. It was so entirely different from the most admired poems of the day that wide or instant popularity could not be expected for it. But to a small circle of readers it came like a welcome country breeze blowing through hot, close city streets. Men read with delight Thomson's minute and realistic descriptions of the common earth beneath their feet, and the sky spread out above, of the animals and the birds, man's lowly brethren, of the changes which, from day to day and hour to hour pass over the face of nature. For a long time the poets had disdained such subjects, and held them to be beneath the dignity of poetry. But this Scottish youth living far from cities, had grown into close familiarity with the scenes and appearances of his native country, and had chosen these for his theme. He had watched a snowstorm coming on:

> The keener tempests come: and fuming dun
> From all the livid East or piercing North,
> Thick clouds ascend; in whose capacious womb
> A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congealed.
> Heavy they roll their fleecy world along,

And the sky saddens with the gathered storm.
Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends,
At first thin-wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad and wide and fast, dimming the day,
With a continual flow.

He had looked sympathetically upon the beasts and birds of the field exposed to the keenness of the storm—the "labourer-ox," the "redbreast, sacred to the household gods," the hare, "timorous of heart," and all the "bleating kind"—had seen them "Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening earth, With looks of dumb despair." It is to this close observation of external nature that Thomson's poem owes its originality and its merit.

The success of *Winter* encouraged the poet to proceed with another work on a similar subject, and in 1727 *Summer* was published, followed in 1728 by *Spring*. By these he increased the reputation which his first poem had brought him. In 1730 came *Autumn* and the closing *Hymn* with which the poem of *The Seasons* reached a triumphant conclusion.

The Seasons is Thomson's masterpiece. He wrote other works, plays and poems, but none, except *The Castle of Indolence* added much to his reputation. Through these two poems he takes a high place among those writers who fall just behind the front rank which contains the greatest of all. The importance of his work in the history of English literature is very great. In an age when artificiality was the fashion, when Pope and his friends were laying down absolute laws concerning both the subject-matter and the style of poetry, Thomson ventured to follow his own natural bent. He wrote upon the subject that interested him most, though that subject was tabooed by the reigning masters of his craft; and he cast his writing into the form which seemed to him fittest for the purpose, though blank verse had gone out with Milton, and the heroic couplet, had long been considered the only proper medium for the poet. By so doing he took the first step toward bringing poetry back to a freer and more natural style, and began the movement which was carried on by Cowper, Collins and Gray, and culminated in the work of Wordsworth.

Later Eighteenth Century

THIS period saw the rise of the novel through the works of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Goldsmith, Fanny Burney, and a host of their imitators. It saw also a further stage in the reaction against the artificial style in poetry that had marked the age of Pope. In 1747 William Collins published his beautiful series of odes—*To Evening*, *The Passions*, and *To Pity*. Collins was a friend and admirer of Thomson, whose death he mourned in the fine poem beginning, "In yonder grave a Druid lies," but his lyrical gift was far greater than that of the elder poet. "Here," says Swinburne, "in the twilight that followed on the splendid sunset of Pope, was at last a poet who was content to sing out what he had in him—to sing, and not to say, without a glimpse of wit or a flash of eloquence." Collins's *Odes* were followed by Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, which was published in 1750, though it was probably written about 1742. Gray wrote also various other poems including *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*. In 1752 was born the unfortunate poet, Chatterton, who, when he was only fifteen years old, began to produce poems which he declared were the work of Thomas Rowley, a priest of Bristol, who had lived in the fifteenth century, and had been discovered by him, Chatterton. In spite of the great merit of his work, he failed to gain such recognition and employment as would preserve him from starvation, and he died by his own hand, before he was eighteen years old. In 1783 came Cowper's *Task*, which marks a great step forward; and three years later were published the early lyrics of Robert Burns. The strange and beautiful lyrics of William Blake which appeared between 1783 and 1795 brought lyric poetry to the stage at which it was ready for the great development which came with the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XXXIV

PAMELA : JOSEPH ANDREWS

BEFORE the first quarter of the eighteenth century was ended, the Augustan age—that golden period for English writers—had passed away. A new dynasty was established in England, and the patronage of the Crown had passed into the hands of men whose interest in literature was small, and who, unlike their predecessors, set little value upon the support that could be given to their policy by fine poems or witty satires. The life history of Addison, of Steele, of Pope, and of Swift must have seemed to the writers under the second George like fairy-tales of some bygone Elysium. To them came no lucrative offices or splendid rewards ; no great lords sued for their company, no high-born ladies contended for their favour. When we look for these writers of a later age we shall not find them at St. James's, or in those quarters of the town where the great world resorts. We shall find them in modest homes in the city or its unfashionable suburbs ; or, lower still, in miserable Grub Street garrets, in Shoe Lane taverns, in the debtors' prisons. Their fortune must depend upon their success in gaining the ear of a small and not easily accessible reading public ; their reward must consist in the hard earnings won by severe toil, not in the splendid gifts of munificent patrons.

It is to these humbler regions that we must now turn. We will imagine ourselves walking one afternoon toward the end of the year 1739, down Fleet Street, and turning into a little court leading out of the main thoroughfare. We will enter the house which stands in the middle of this court. It is a large and high building, used partly as a dwelling-house, partly as a printing establishment. Obviously the business carried

on here is a thriving one. The printing presses are busily at work, carts are loading and unloading at the door, workmen pass to and fro, and the whole place hums like a hive of industry. If we look into the private office beyond the outer shop we shall see the originator and controller of all this activity. He is a short, plump, rosy-cheeked man of fifty, with a demure air, and a gentle, kindly manner. He wears a fair wig, and his clothes are sober in colour and cut and excellent in quality. He looks, in fact, what he is—the industrious apprentice, who, beginning at the bottom of the ladder, has by steady application and frugal living gradually raised his fortune; has, after the manner of industrious apprentices, married his master's daughter; and has become an eminently respectable member of citizen society. At the moment when we first see him he is writing one of those 'honest dedications' for which he is famous, and is glowing with moral ardour as the virtuous sentiments flow readily from his pen. When the day's business is over, he will betake himself to his own private part of the house, where his wife—not the 'master's daughter' of his earlier career, for she died eight years ago, and the printer remarried in the next year—his four daughters, and his baby son await him. He will eat the meal his careful wife has prepared for him—eat it probably not without some little plaintive grumbling, for he suffers from nervous disorders which derange his digestion. Afterward he will sit down again to write, for he cannot long be happy without a pen in his hand. To-night he is engaged in a new project. He has lately been asked by two of his friends, publishers, to write "a little volume of Letters, in a common style, on such subjects as might be of use to those country readers, who were unable to indite for themselves." Such an invitation was especially welcome to Richardson, who, from his earliest years, had been a voluminous letter-writer, both on his own behalf, and on that of other people. "I was an early favourite," he tells us, "with all the young women of taste and reading in the neighbourhood. Half a dozen of them, when met to work with their needles, used, when they got a book they liked, and thought I

Samuel Richardson
From an old Engraving

should, to borrow me to read to them ; . . . I was not more than thirteen, when some of these young women, unknown to each other, having a high opinion of my taciturnity, revealed to me their love-secrets, in order to induce me to give them copies to write after, or correct, for answers to their lover's letters ; nor did anyone of them ever know that I was the secretary to the others."

Practice of this kind had made Richardson perfect in his favourite art. But he was a moralist even before he was a letter-writer, and when his friends made to him their proposition for a series of letters, he hastened to ensure that these should contain a moral element. "'Will it be any harm,' said I, 'in a piece you want to be written so low, if we should instruct them how they should think and act in common cases, as well as indite ?' They were the more urgent with me to begin the little volume for this hint. I set about it."

We can imagine Richardson as he 'set about' this labour of love, and can picture the enjoyment with which, having chosen his subjects and titles, he assumed the position of moral guide to the unlearned, whom he aspired to teach " how to think and act justly and prudently, in the common concerns of human life." One class of the letters that he wrote aroused his particular enthusiasm. The story must be told in his own words. " In the progress of it " (*i.e.* of the collection of letters) " writing two or three letters to instruct handsome girls who were obliged to go out to service, as we phrase it, how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue, I thought of a story I had heard many years before." The story was about a young girl, who " had been taken at twelve years of age, for the sweetness of her manners and modesty, and for an understanding above her years " into the service of a wealthy lady. Here " improving daily in beauty, modesty, and genteel and good behaviour," she had gained the love of all who knew her. She had resisted all the temptations to which her position made her liable, and had remained a model of virtue, prudence, and good sense. Finally, she had married her mistress's son, and, in her new rank, had " behaved herself

with so much dignity, sweetness and humility, that she made herself beloved of everybody, and even by his relations, who at first despised her; and now had the blessings both of rich and poor, and the love of her husband."

The recollection of this story suggested to Richardson the composition of a work more connected and more important than the series of letters on which he was engaged. He began to write an account of the adventures of this servant-girl heroine, in the form of letters written by her to her parents. "Little did I think, at first," he says, "of making one, much less two volumes of it. . . . I thought the story, if written in an easy, natural manner, suitable to the simplicity of it, might possibly introduce a new species of writing, that might possibly turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance writing, and dismissing the improbable and marvellous, with which novels generally abound, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue." But as the work proceeded the ardour of composition increased. Richardson's actual letters to his correspondents had always been lengthy and verbose, but his own prolixity became as nothing beside the prolixity with which he endowed his heroine. If any servant-girl ever wrote letters after the fashion of Pamela—for so Richardson called her, taking the name perhaps, from one of the characters of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*—she would have little time left for the duties of her situation. But considerations of this kind did not occur to the enthusiastic printer, newly turned author. He did not stop to criticize, but wrote on and on, giving the minutest details relating to his heroine's life and conduct, analysing with microscopic exactness the thoughts and impulses of her heart. His enthusiasm imparted itself to his wife, and to a young lady visitor then staying in the house. Every evening, he tells us, they would come to his little writing-closet, saying, "Have you any more of Pamela, Mr. R.? We are come to hear a little more of Pamela." Then the proud author would read them his latest pages, and drink in the sweetness of the praises and flattery they lavished upon him.

Pamela was begun on November 10, 1739, and finished January 10, 1740. It was published November 1740, with a title-page that ran as follows: Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded. In a Series of Familiar Letters from a beautiful young Damsel to her Parents. Now first published in order to cultivate the Principles of Virtue and Religion in the Minds of the Youth of both Sexes. A Narrative which has its Foundation in Truth and Nature; and at the same time that it agreeably entertains, by a Variety of curious and affecting Incidents, is intirely divested of all those Images, which, in too many Pieces calculated for Amusement only, tend to inflame the Minds they should instruct."

Thus casually, almost accidentally was the book written which occupies such an important position in the history of the English novel. There had been before Richardson many writers of stories and romances, but *Pamela* is fundamentally different from any of these. It deals with the ordinary events of everyday life, and owes none of its interest to the marvellous, or the unusual; it has a clear and carefully defined plot though this is somewhat obscured by the diffuseness of the treatment; it attempts, though with no very great success, to present characters that become vivid and life-like to the reader through the inner workings of their minds rather than through their outward appearance and behaviour; and, in order to do this, it undertakes such a minute and searching analysis of feeling and motive as, in itself, suffices to mark the book as an entirely new departure in fiction.

Pamela achieved an instantaneous and enormous success. It was hailed as the greatest work on the side of morality, that the age had seen. Clergymen praised it from their pulpits, and ladies wrote to Richardson thanking him for his charming, his elevating, his incomparable book. Pope said that it "would do more good than many volumes of sermons." Fashionable ladies were careful to exhibit their copies in places of public resort, to show that they were not behindhand in the study of a book which the world had agreed to praise. But the most striking tribute to the real human power of the book lies

in the story which is told of the villagers of Slough. For many evenings they had gathered round the fire of the local forge, while the blacksmith read aloud the history of Pamela. When he came to the triumphant conclusion which left her a great lady, his audience, transported with delight, rushed to the church and insisted on ringing the bells.

It is difficult for us to-day to understand the general contemporary estimate of *Pamela*. It appears to a modern reader intolerably tedious and long drawn out, so that he heartily agrees with the first part of the criticism passed by Dr. Johnson on the book. "If you read Richardson for the story your impatience would be so great that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story only as giving rise to the sentiment." Nowadays, however, the sentiment seems even less tolerable than the story, and it is only the very determined reader who gets far enough into *Pamela* to appreciate its undoubted merits. There are some charming pictures of the pretty heroine at the various stages of her career. We see her as she stands blushing before her master, dressed in a gown she has made for herself of "a good sad colour'd stuff," with "robings and facings of a pretty bit of printed calicoe I had by me," a "round ear'd cap" upon her head, and "a pair of knit mittens turn'd up with white calicoe" upon her hands; her gown short enough to show the "blue worsted hose that make a smartish appearance with white clocks." Or again, when some fine lady visitors have petitioned to see the servant maid known as "the greatest beauty in the country." "The Countess took me by the hand. Don't be asham'd child: I wish I had just such a face to be asham'd of." The other ladies join in praising and teasing her. "Can the pretty image speak?" asks one. Pamela, of course, behaves with the utmost propriety. "I beg, said I, to withdraw: for the sense I have of my unworthiness renders me unfit for such a presence. I then went away with one of my best curchees." This sense of her own unworthiness must have been strong indeed, to have persisted in face of the chorus of praise that

most of her letters are occupied in recording; for Pamela suffers under the disadvantage imposed upon all heroines who tell their own stories, that she must, out of her own mouth, let us know how good, and wise, and beautiful she is. The telling scarcely seems to embarrass her, and she makes no difficulty in going about the business in the plainest manner. Finally she tells of all the glories of her newly married state—how she went to church on Sunday in the "best chariot" which had been "clean'd, lin'd, and new harness'd"; how the coachman and footman wore their new liveries; how splendid she herself was in a "suit of white, flower'd with gold, and rich head-dress with a diamond necklace and earrings." She tells how, when she and her husband walked up the aisle of the church "a little late," there were abundance of gazers and whisperers, but how she cared for none of them since her "dear master behaved with so intrepid an air and was so cheerful and complaisant to me, that he did credit to his kind choice, instead of showing that he was ashamed of it."

The morality of *Pamela*, which the eighteenth century judged to be of such superlative quality, seems to a later age to be little more than a detailed exposition on the theme, "honesty is the best policy." Pamela has too keen an eye to her own interests, is too prudent and calculating, and receives with too much rapture the proposal of marriage made by a man whose courtship of her can only be regarded as a series of insults, to be a favourite heroine with the present generation. Yet she is not without charm, and for many of her faults the public standard of the time, and not her creator, is responsible.

No one was more surprised than Samuel Richardson himself at the reception given to *Pamela*. "Its strange Success at Publication," he wrote, six years later, "is still my Surprize." Yet he found the attention and the homage that it brought him very pleasant. He had lately bought a country house at Fulham, where he had begun to spend all the time that he could spare from his business in Salisbury Court. At this house he received his admirers—principally ladies; and here were held those tea-drinkings which none of the wits who

have poked fun at the kindly, industrious, nervous little printer have forgotten. They have shown him as the centre of an adoring group who hung upon the words of their "dear Mr. Richardson" and purred their admiration of his great gifts; while he, trying to enact the part of lion, could produce only a roar of the very feeblest description. The picture is, no doubt, exaggerated; but it is probably true that Richardson received far more praise than was good for him, and suffered in consequence.

The chorus of praise was, however, not left undisturbed by harsher notes. It was inevitable that *Pamela* should excite among men whose minds were of a stronger, more virile character than Richardson's own, a certain amount of ridicule. Parodies were soon forthcoming. One of these, *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews*, was a really clever production, and caused Richardson great annoyance. But the most famous of the books to which *Pamela* gave rise was *Joseph Andrews*, of which some account must now be given.

Among the readers of *Pamela* was a young man, lately called to the Bar, named Henry Fielding. Fielding was, in almost every respect, the exact opposite of Richardson, with whom he had some slight acquaintance. He was well-born and well-educated, but his father, a soldier who had fought with distinction under Marlborough, had so large a family that he was able to do little for his younger sons. Since, at the age of twenty-one, he had left Leyden University where he had gone to study law, Henry Fielding had been living by his wits, in London. He had written many plays, some of which had attained a measure of success, while others had been complete failures. In prosperous times he had rioted and feasted with his brothers of the theatre, and when all his money was gone he had retired to his miserable garret, and, in hot haste had scribbled a play that might serve to bring in a few pounds for immediate needs. He had married and set up a grand establishment in Dorsetshire on his wife's small fortune. In a few months the fortune was spent, and Fielding was back again in London. He had taken up again his theatrical work,

but had soon found that the proceeds of his writing were too small to enable him to support his wife and his baby daughter. He had therefore returned to his early project of studying for the Bar, and in 1740 had been 'called' and had set up as a barrister. He had eked out his scanty income by contributions to various newspapers, and in spite of all his troubles he was still, at three-and-thirty, a careless, generous, high-spirited, improvident, genial man, eager for any project which offered a chance of exercise for his keen wits, and money for his needy family.

Such a man could not fail to see the weak points of *Pamela*, and the thought of the serious, fussy little printer who was the author of the book strengthened the temptation Fielding felt toward parodying the work which his robust judgment condemned as sentimental and even maudlin. He set to work to write the history of Joseph Andrews, brother to Pamela, a serving-man who was subjected to temptations similar to those which his famous sister had so triumphantly surmounted. Fielding proclaimed that the full name of 'Mr. B.' was Booby, and he transformed the matchless Pamela into Lady Booby. But the parody, thus lightly begun, took a strong hold upon Fielding's imagination. The characters came to life under his hand. Joseph Andrews developed from the pretty milksop that the author had at first intended him to be, into a fine manly young fellow, resembling his sister Pamela in personal beauty only, whom it was impossible to confine to the ignoble part originally designed for him. The action of the story grew brisk and the interest quickened. Other characters were introduced, chief among them the immortal Parson Adams. From the moment when, at the end of the second chapter, we are introduced to him drinking a cup of ale in Sir Thomas Booby's kitchen and asking Joseph "several questions concerning religion," he dominates the story. There is not indeed in all fiction a more delightful parson than Parson Adams. He is own brother to the Vicar of Wakefield, and that other village pastor of Goldsmith's of whom we are told "e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side." "Mr. Abraham Adams," says Fielding, "was an excellent

scholar. He was a perfect master of the Greek and Latin languages; to which he added a great share of knowledge in the Oriental tongues; and could read and translate French, Italian, and Spanish. He had applied many years to the most severe study, and had treasured up a fund of learning rarely to be met with in an university. He was, besides, a man of good sense, good parts and good nature; but was at the same time as entirely ignorant of the ways of this world as an infant just entered into it could possibly be. As he had never any intention to deceive, so he never suspected such a design in others. He was generous, friendly and brave to an excess; but simplicity was his characteristic. . . . His virtue, and his other qualifications, as they rendered him equal to his office, so they made him an agreeable and valuable companion, and had so much endeared and well recommended him to a bishop, that at the age of fifty he was provided with a handsome income of twenty-three pounds a year; which, however, he could not make any great figure with, because he lived in a dear country, and was a little encumbered with a wife and six children." He sets out, with nine shillings and threepence halfpenny in his pocket, on a journey to London, to publish three volumes of sermons, but, halfway there, he discovers that he has left the sermons at home, and contentedly returns, reflecting, "This disappointment may perhaps be intended for my good." He is taken in by every plausible rogue he meets upon the road; but he has a valiant spirit and lays about him sturdily with his famous crabstick, in the defence of his fellow-travellers. We see him in homely guise and under ludicrous conditions—leaning over the rail of the inn gallery smoking his blackened pipe, "a nightcap drawn over his wig, and a short greatcoat, which half covered his cassock"; or rising drenched from the tub of cold water to which a practical joke on the part of the host of the inn has consigned him. Yet he has throughout a certain dignity of sweetness of which nothing can deprive him, and is, under all the circumstances of his life, charming and delightful.

Next to Parson Adams comes Mrs. Slipslop, Lady Booby's

waiting-maid. She is "a maiden gentlewoman of about forty-five years of age," whose conversation, like that of Mrs. Malaprop, exhibits "a fine derangement of epitaphs." "Do you assinuate," she says to Joseph, "that I am old enough to be your mother? I don't know what a stripling may think, but I believe a man would refer me to any green-sickness silly girl whatsomdever."

These new interests and new characters quickly succeeded in driving from Fielding's mind the original idea with which he had started the book. After the first few chapters it is gradually dropped, and we hear no more of Pamela until she is introduced at the end of the book in connexion with the marriage of her brother Joseph (who is discovered not to be her brother) to the beautiful Fanny (who turns out to be Pamela's sister). At the wedding Pamela so far forgets herself as to join with her husband in laughing in church, and is severely and publicly rebuked by Parson Adams.

In 1742 Fielding published his book, under the title of *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and his friend Mr. Abraham Adams.* It still retained enough of the nature of a parody to cause serious annoyance to poor Richardson, who, unfortunately, had neither the greatness of mind which would enable him to forgive the offence nor the self-control which would serve to conceal his chagrin. He lost no opportunity of attempting to detract from Fielding's praises, and his circle of adoring ladies agreed with him in regarding *Joseph Andrews* as "a lewd and ungenerous engraftment" upon the pure and perfect growth of *Pamela.* Fielding's four sisters were included in the company of Richardson's admirers, and must have suffered considerable embarrassment through the conflicting claims of their brother and the idol of their worship. In Fielding's generous and manly nature no petty jealousy could find a place. His own book, though it was successful beyond his hopes, did not attain to anything like the vogue of *Pamela.* Its importance to its author could not, however, be measured by the money return it brought him. *Joseph Andrews* had shown Fielding the direction in which his

great powers could best be exercised. It had turned him from weary hack-work to labour in which he felt he had found his true means of expression.

We cannot here trace in detail the subsequent careers of our two authors, but will briefly sum up the most important events in each. Both Richardson and Fielding went on with the work of novel-writing for which they had, almost by chance, discovered their aptitude, and each produced works far surpassing in merit their first efforts. In 1748 Richardson produced *Clarissa Harlowe*, which is by most critics considered to be his masterpiece. He followed this, in 1753, by *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*. During the last seven years of his life he wrote little, and published nothing except, in 1755, a *Collection of Moral and Instructive Sentiments* gathered from his three novels. He remained the idol of an admiring circle until his death in 1761.

Fielding, after the publication of *Joseph Andrews*, went on with his legal and journalistic work. His fortunes were still very low, and he suffered many hardships. His wife died in 1743. In 1747 he married again, and in 1748 was appointed a justice of the peace for Westminster. In the next year appeared his second novel *Tom Jones*. This great work still keeps its place among the masterpieces of English fiction. Like *Joseph Andrews* it is disfigured by many coarse passages which, though partly due to the public taste of the time, constitute a real and serious blemish. But it is, withal, a manly, wise, and witty book, full of the intense enjoyment of life and the hatred of sham and of cant which characterized its author.

A third novel entitled *Amelia* appeared in 1751. By this time Fielding's health was failing. A period of severe and incessant work following upon a reckless and dissipated youth had broken down his originally fine constitution. In 1754, when asthma, jaundice and dropsy had brought him very near death, he set out on a voyage to Lisbon, in the hope of recovering his health. But the hope was vain. He died at Lisbon, on October 8, 1754, and was buried in the English cemetery of that city.

CHAPTER XXXV

JOHNSON'S DICTIONARY: THE LIVES OF THE POETS

IN the year 1737 there travelled up to London from their native town of Lichfield, a big, burly young man, twenty-eight years old, with a younger, slighter companion, whose mobile, expressive face and quick movements formed a strong contrast to the heavy strength which marked both the countenance and gait of the other. The elder traveller was, indeed, a queer, uncouth figure. His huge form was clad in garments that were soiled and torn and arranged in slovenly fashion. His face was disfigured by the disease known as the king's evil, and his short-sighted, peering eyes gave the final grotesque touch to a countenance which might, from the regularity of its features and from its look of massive strength, have been dignified and impressive. Ever and again the great limbs twitched convulsively, and the powerful hands were raised in awkward gesticulations, so that passers-by turned to look at the curious figure and laughed as they went on their way. The two travellers had come to London to seek their fortunes, with a few shillings and two or three letters of introduction in their pockets. The elder had also as capital three acts of a tragedy he had written, called *Irene*, a store of classical learning, and some small literary experience. The younger had his mobile face, great powers of mimicry, and strong dramatic talent.

Little good came from the letters of introduction, except that they enabled the two to raise a joint loan of five pounds for immediate necessities. Then began the search for a means of livelihood. The younger man applied for employment at

the theatres, where he had some friends, and here his wonderful talent was soon recognized, so that he rose rapidly and became known to the world as the great actor David Garrick. The elder man found more difficulty; and his need was even greater than his friend's, for he had left behind him at Lichfield a wife for whom he wished to make a home. He offered his services to many booksellers, but obtained only the scantiest and worst-paid hack-work. He lodged in a wretched garret, and dined at the cheapest of the miserable taverns that were to be found in the poorest quarter of London. Sometimes even these were beyond his reach, and then, cold and hungry, he walked all night about the dark and empty streets, or lay down in some corner among the city's beggars and thieves. Such were the experiences which marked the early attempts of Samuel Johnson to gain a living by his pen.

It was only very gradually that things improved. In 1738 Johnson managed to publish his poem of *London*, which brought him to the notice of Pope and some other celebrated men. The merit of the poem was recognized, and some attempts were made to obtain for Johnson a position which would afford him a chance of earning an adequate income, but they came to nothing, and the only reward that Johnson received was the ten guineas paid him by his bookseller.

Nearly ten more years passed in ill-paid and arduous toil as a bookseller's hack. Johnson began to be known as a man whose work had a scholarly quality, but little credit was to be gained from the composition of sermons, prefaces, indexes and advertisements, on which he was mainly occupied. One day, in 1747, he was sitting in the shop of a bookseller named Robert Dodsley, and talking over various literary plans. "I believe," said Dodsley, "that a dictionary of the English language is a work that is greatly needed, and one which would be well received by the public." Johnson considered the suggestion. "I believe," he said, after a pause, "that I shall not undertake it." The idea of compiling a dictionary

had occurred to him before, but the words of the bookseller gave definiteness to what had been only a vaguely conceived plan. Finally he resolved that he would undertake the work. At Dodsley's suggestion he wrote to Lord Chesterfield, Secretary of State, sending an outline of his scheme, in the hope of receiving the great man's patronage.

Preliminary arrangements were soon completed. Johnson was to receive fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds for the work, which he expected to finish in three years. Out of this he would have to pay several assistants. The large amount of drudgery involved was very distasteful to him, for he was constitutionally indolent, and hated sustained labour. Seven years of this toil were before him, for his dictionary was not finished until 1755. In his preface he records his views concerning the work which had occupied him for so long. "Those who toil at the lower employments of life," he says, "miss the rewards which attend on the higher branches of industry. Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries, whom mankind have considered, not as the pupil, but the slave of science, the pioneer of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths through which Learning and Genius press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress." In the Dictionary itself he defines a lexicographer as "a harmless drudge, that busies himself in tracing the original and detailing the significance of words." In Johnson's day etymology, in a scientific sense, was unknown, and consequently we shall not expect to find him attempting to trace out the historical processes by which the language has been developed. He contents himself with making a collection of the words it contains, defining the meaning of these, and adding illustrative quotations. Where the etymology is obvious, or well known, he gives it; where it is unknown, he sometimes makes a whimsical guess. But the chief feature of his dictionary is its illustrative passages. "When first I collected these authorities," he says, "I was desirous that every quotation should be useful to some other

end than the illustration of a word: I therefore extracted from philosophers principles of science, from historians remarkable facts; from chymists complete processes; from divines striking exhortations and from poets beautiful descriptions." Before long, however, he found that he was "forced to reduce his transcripts very often to clusters of words in which scarcely any meaning is retained." "Some passages," he says, "I have yet spared, which may relieve the labour of verbal searches, and intersperse with verdure of flowers the dusty deserts of barren philology."

As a rule Johnson's definitions are logical and accurate. Some are rather amusingly coloured by his political prejudices. A pension, he says, is "an allowance made to anyone without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state-hireling for treason to his country." Excise he defines as "a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged, not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid." With regard to the orthography of the words he says, "I have endeavoured to proceed with a scholar's reverence for antiquity, and a grammarian's regard to the genius of our tongue"; and he adds, "I am not yet so lost in lexicography as to forget that words are the daughters of earth, and that things are the sons of heaven."

"The English dictionary," he says in conclusion, "was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. . . . I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds. I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise."

The above extracts from the Preface to the Dictionary illustrate the English style to which, by 1755, Johnson had attained. There is, however, another piece of prose writing, the most famous and widely known of all his compositions,

which is always associated with the publication of the dictionary. This is the celebrated letter to Lord Chesterfield. Chesterfield, it seems, had given him some hopes of help and patronage, but these had not been fulfilled. When the Dictionary was on the eve of publication, and was beginning to be talked about, it apparently occurred to the noble lord that the dedication of such a work to himself would add to his importance as a patron of literature. He therefore wrote two articles, which were published in *The World*, a magazine which circulated among men of fashion. In these he set forward the need of a dictionary, and paid to Johnson various compliments upon his learning and literary ability. But Johnson quickly saw through the manœuvre, and his reply to it was the immortal letter. We will quote two paragraphs from this :

" Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door ; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before. . . .

" Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help ? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind ; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it ; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it ; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself."

The sturdy independence of Johnson's spirit, his powers of irony, and the stately, measured periods he loved to use, are all illustrated in this famous letter. The melancholy of its tone we have seen repeated in the closing passage of the Preface. With Johnson melancholy was constitutional, but

he had, moreover, at this time, heavy cause for sadness. In March 1752, his wife, who had joined him in London some time previously, had died. From this blow Johnson never fully recovered. Mrs. Johnson was twenty years older than her husband; she was, Garrick tells us, very fat, her cheeks were covered with rouge, her dress was tawdry, her manners affected and unpleasing. Yet Johnson loved her tenderly. To his short-sighted eyes she was beautiful, and to the end of his life he mourned his 'dear Tetty,' and kept the anniversary of her death with fasting and prayer. "This is the day," he wrote, when his own life was rapidly drawing to a close, "on which, in 1752, dear Tetty died. I have now uttered a prayer of repentance and contrition; perhaps Tetty knows that I prayed for her. Perhaps Tetty is now praying for me. God help me. Thou, God, art merciful, hear my prayers and enable me to trust in Thee."

But in spite of this great and natural despondency the most prosperous, and probably the happiest part of Johnson's life was, in 1755, yet to come. He was forty-six years old, strong and vigorous in body and intellect. His material circumstances had improved, and were still improving. His fame as a writer already stood higher than that of any man of his day, and he was beginning to be known for those conversational powers to which, almost more than to his writings, he owes his fame. In 1749 he had published his poem, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. In the same year, through the good offices of his old friend, Garrick, his tragedy, *Irene*, had been produced at Drury Lane, and though, on the whole, it was a failure, it had brought Johnson a substantial sum of money and some increase of reputation. From March 1750 to March 1752 he was engaged on *The Rambler*, a paper published twice a week, and for each number he received two guineas. Easier circumstances had developed his social tendencies, which in certain directions were strong. For fashionable society Johnson was altogether unfitted. His person was awkward, his dress slovenly; the convulsive twitchings and swayings which resulted from natural infirmity and the uncouth habits formed

Dr. Johnson in the Hebrides 338

during the years spent in extreme poverty, made him a ludicrous, and, in some eyes, a disgusting figure. Lord Chesterfield called him "a respectable Hottentot, who throws his meat anywhere but down his throat." "He laughs," said Tom Davies, "like a rhinoceros." But in a company of congenial friends Johnson shone. He was, to use the word he himself invented, a "clubbable" man. The ordinary chit-chat of society he despised, but he loved to meet his friends in the parlour of a tavern, and "fold his legs and have his talk out." As early as 1749 he had formed a club which met each week at a "famous beef-steak house" in Ivy Lane. This, in 1764, was superseded by another known in literary history as "The Club," which met at the Turk's Head, Gerrard Street, Soho. To this club belonged Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Edmund Burke, David Garrick, Edward Gibbon, James Boswell, and many other famous men of the period. It is to the last-named member, a young Scottish laird whose admiration for Johnson was the leading passion of his life, that we owe the full knowledge we possess of the proceedings of this club. In his *Life of Johnson* Boswell records in the utmost detail the sayings and doings of his idol, so that we learn to know the great literary dictator as a familiar friend. We know all about his brusque, dictatorial manner, and the crushing blows he dealt his conversational opponents. We know, too, something about his kind and tender heart, and the way in which he made his house a refuge for various waifs and strays who, without his help, would have been almost destitute.

In 1759 he published *Rasselas*, a moral story with an Oriental setting. In 1762 a pension of £300 was offered to him by George III. Johnson naturally hesitated as to whether, after the definition that he had given in his Dictionary, he could himself become a pensioner without injury to his self-respect. His scruples were set at rest by the assurance that the pension was bestowed not on account of anything he was expected to do, but as a reward for what he had already done; and it was accepted.

After Johnson received his pension he wrote little. He worked hard only when his bread depended upon his efforts. During his later years he gave himself up almost entirely to the particular kind of social intercourse that he loved, and cultivated conversation as a fine art. He was however, to produce one more great work. In 1777 a syndicate of booksellers who were planning an edition of the English Poets, asked him if he would furnish a short life of each poet, to form a kind of preface. He was to name his own terms. Johnson agreed, and asked two hundred guineas for his work. Had he asked a thousand, his biographer tells us, it would have been willingly given. *The Lives of the Poets*, which was the outcome of this negotiation, is Johnson's finest work. His criticisms are, in most cases, just, sound, and independent. In a few instances he was misled by prejudice, as in his famous criticism of Milton's *Lycidas*. "One of the poems on which much praise has been bestowed," he says, "is *Lycidas;* of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing. . . . In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply are easily exhausted, and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labours and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines?—

> We drove afield, and both together heard
> What time the grayfly winds her sultry horn,
> Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

We know that they never drove afield, and had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found."

Johnson, as is easily seen, had little appreciation of the

imaginative element in poetry and no ear for the subtler harmonies of verse. His first requirement of poetry as well as of prose was that it should be good sense. He saw little difference between poetry and prose except with regard to metre and rhyme. He belonged to the school of Dryden and Pope, and the parallel that he draws between these two poets in his *Life of Pope* shows him perhaps at his best. We will quote a part of this famous passage: "Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation; and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope. . . . The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden observes the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe and levelled by the roller."

The *Lives of the Poets* was finished in 1781, and after this Johnson wrote no more. He still reigned as the great dictator in matters literary. All the other writers of the day looked upon his approval as certifying the merit of their work, and dreaded his censure. Thin-skinned poets shrank from the rough and biting criticisms which he did not hesitate to bestow, but there were many who had cause to bless his kindly help. He reigned, like his seventeenth-century namesake, the "great Ben" by virtue of his robust and manly nature, his kind heart and his vigorous genius; and when he died, in 1784, at the age of seventy-five, few men could have been mourned more sincerely or missed more acutely.

"The names of many greater writers," says Sir Leslie Stephen, "are inscribed upon the walls of Westminster Abbey; but scarcely anyone lies there whose heart was more acutely responsive during life to the deepest and tenderest of human

emotions. In visiting that strange gathering of departed heroes and statesmen and philanthropists and poets, there are many whose words and deeds have a far greater influence upon our imaginations; but there are very few whom, when all has been said, we can love so heartily as Samuel Johnson."

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD

NEEDY adventurers from all parts of the three kingdoms drifted up to London as naturally in the eighteenth century as at the present day: and then, as now, the incoming stream brought with it, at rare intervals, a man of genius. We have seen how, in 1737, Johnson and Garrick came up from their homes in Staffordshire, and how some twelve years earlier, Scotland had sent up her penniless poet, James Thomson, author of *The Seasons*. But it was Ireland that gave to us the poorest, the most lovable, and the most beloved of all this ragged company; and his name was Oliver Goldsmith.

At the time when Johnson left Lichfield, Oliver Goldsmith was an awkward, ugly little boy, eight years old, living at the pretty parsonage house which belonged to the quaint Irish village of Lissoy. Everybody laughed at him for his comical face and his simple manners, and many considered him "little better than a fool"; yet everybody loved him for his tender heart and his merry spirit. Of his schooldays we hear the same story. He was stupid at his lessons and clumsy in his play, and he gained affection and ridicule in almost equal measure. When he was sixteen years old he left school, and then came the question, what was to be done with him? His father was only a poor Irish minister, and had neither money nor interest to push the fortunes of this, the most unpromising of all his six children. There was, however, an uncle, the Rev. Thomas Contarine, who loved the lad and wished to help him. Oliver, he said, must go to college. But his father was not able to maintain him there, except as a

sizar, and Master Oliver's pride rebelled against the indignity of such a position. At last, however, his uncle persuaded him that such ideas were both wrong and foolish, and in June 1744 Goldsmith entered Trinity College, Dublin.

He remained at the university for five years. During the whole time his allowance was of the scantiest, and when, in 1747, his father died, matters became even worse than before. He had nothing to depend on save the supplies which his uncle Contarine managed to send him. When these failed he begged a loan from a friend, or pawned some of his poor clothes, or earned five shillings by writing a ballad, which was sung in the streets and sold for a penny a copy. He studied as little as he possibly could, and was so idle, careless and riotous in his behaviour that he was constantly in disgrace. Once he ran away from the university, and made his way home, but his elder brother persuaded him to go back. Finally, in 1749, Goldsmith, though his name stood at the bottom of the list, succeeded in gaining his degree, and so brought his college career to a close.

He went back to his mother's house at Lissoy, and settled contentedly down to a life of idleness. During the day he lounged about the village, or helped his mother and his brother in small matters, and when the evening came he made his way to the village inn where he drank and sang with the humble company assembled there. To his careless, easy nature the thought of what was to become of him in the future gave no concern, but his family began to be anxious. Oliver was now twenty-one, and bid fair to turn out a ne'er-do-well. Something must be done. They persuaded him to try to enter the Church as a minister, but, for some reason or other the Bishop refused his application. They found him a post as a tutor but he quarrelled with his patron, and returned home. Then he set out, with the small sum of money he had earned in his pocket, to seek his fortune, but he soon came back without the money, and with a marvellous story to account for his failure. He next thought he would like to try the legal profession, and his kind uncle Contarine gave him fifty pounds

Goldsmith at Lissoy
Eyre Crowe, A.R.A.

with which to go to London and start on his career. Goldsmith, however, did not get farther than Dublin: there he gambled away the fifty pounds, and returned once more to his friends. Again he was forgiven, and his next idea was to become a doctor. Once more his uncle provided him with funds, and in 1752 Goldsmith left for Edinburgh. He never saw Ireland again.

In Edinburgh he lived for about eighteen months, and at the end of that time wrote to his uncle concerning a project of proceeding to Paris and continuing his studies at the university of that city. His uncle sent him twenty pounds and he started for the Continent, but, changing his mind, decided to go to Leyden, where a famous medical professor was lecturing. The lectures did not come up to Goldsmith's expectations, or, which is more probable, his zeal for medical study declined. He left Leyden with a guinea in his pocket, and started on a tour through Europe. Of this strange journey we know very little, but what seems certain is that it was a kind of vagabond's tramp, in which subsistence was from hand to mouth, and no provision was ever made for the morrow. Whether, as Boswell tells us, he 'disputed' his way through Europe: whether, like the Vicar's son in his famous story, he sang, and played on the flute to the peasants for his bread and his night's lodging; whether, as is more probable, he begged from the charitable and did odd jobs for those who would pay for them, still remains a question. From one ot the Continental Universities it seems fairly certain that he gained a degree, but we do not know from which. It is clear that he visited Antwerp, Brussels and other towns in Flanders, that he reached Switzerland, crossed the Alps into Italy, and returned through France. On February 1, 1756, he landed at Dover, without a penny in his pocket. Once more he was obliged to call upon his wits to pay his travelling expenses, and by this method of journeying he was a fortnight on the road to London. He reached it at last, and began, as so many men had done before him, a struggle for existence in the great city.

For him the struggle was harder than it had been for Johnson,

though perhaps it was not so bitter; for if he was without Johnson's sturdy fighting power, he had his own Irish versatility and easy hopefulness. It is difficult, however, to imagine how he managed to exist during those first terrible months. In after days he was persistently silent concerning this period of his life, and only by a few half-joking, casual allusions gave any hint of his sufferings. "When I lived among the beggars in Axe Lane," he once said to a mixed company of people, who were much amazed and inclined to regard the remark as a joke. But it is probable that Goldsmith was speaking sad and sober truth. When we first hear of him he was working in a chemist's shop; then we meet him as a doctor, dressed in a pitifully old green and gold coat, physicking the poor of Bankside. For a time he was employed as a corrector of the press in the printing establishment of Mr. Samuel Richardson, and ventured to show to the great moralist a tragedy he had written. But Richardson was scarcely the man to recognize genius in rags, and, moreover, it is difficult to imagine Goldsmith writing a good tragedy. We find him next at Peckham, as usher in a school kept by a certain Dr. Milner, and here he seems to have been treated with great kindness, and to have been fairly happy and contented. One day a bookseller named Griffiths dined at Dr. Milner's table, and something in the queer, ungainly usher's conversation, or in the tales that were told about him made the man of business believe that he had stumbled upon a hidden literary genius. He induced Goldsmith to leave his employment, and turn hack-writer. Goldsmith removed to Griffiths' house in Paternoster Row, where he was to receive board, lodging and a small salary in return for his services. There, in company with five or six others, hired on similar terms, he sat down every day to write, for a certain fixed number of hours, articles for Griffiths' *Monthly Review*. After this humble and not very pleasant fashion did Goldsmith begin his literary career.

Such forced and regular labour was not, however, to his taste. His engagement had been for a year, but at the end of five months he quarrelled with Griffiths, and removed to a

garret in Fleet Street. For a time he struggled on as a miscellaneous hack-writer. Then he tried Dr. Milner's once more, but soon drifted back to literature. From 1758 to 1760 he lived in Green Arbour Court, Old Bailey. Here he seems to have applied himself seriously to his work. He set about that *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* which is the first of his important works. Writing in his miserable garret, amid the squalor and filth of a city slum, Goldsmith's thoughts went back longingly to his dear country of Ireland, and the happy village of Lissoy where his boyhood had been spent. "Whether I eat or starve," he wrote to his sister's husband, who still lived at Lissoy, "live in a first floor, or four pair of stairs high, I still remember my Irish friends with pleasure; nay, my very country comes in for a share of my affection." He vows he would rather hear *Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night* sung at a Lissoy fireside than the finest efforts of a great singer, and tells how, when he climbs Hampstead Hill and looks over the fine prospect, he can think only of that dearer scene he has looked on so many times from the little mount at Lissoy Gate. His hopefulness was beginning to give way, under long-continued poverty and distress; his health, too, was suffering. "It gives me some pain," he wrote to his brother Henry, "to think I am almost beginning the world at the age of thirty-one. Though I never had a day's illness since I saw you, I am not that strong active man you once knew me. You scarcely can conceive how much eight years of disappointment, anguish, and study, have worn me down. . . . Imagine to yourself a pale melancholy visage, with two great wrinkles before the eyebrows, with an eye disgustingly severe, and a big wig; and you have a perfect picture of my present appearance. . . . I can neither laugh nor drink; have contracted a hesitating, disagreeable manner of speaking, and a visage that looks ill-nature itself; in short, I have thought myself into a settled melancholy, and an utter disgust of all that life brings with it."

Poor Goldsmith! He had tired out the patience of friends who had treated him with far more forbearance than he had

deserved. Yet their hearts must have ached as they read these piteous letters from their poor exile. Oliver, they perhaps said to one another, had indeed been idle, careless and ungrateful. Yet he had a warm heart, and a winning way with him, and was always ready to do a poor creature a kindness, and to share his last sixpence with a friend. It was a pity he had ever left old Ireland.

Yet at this time the worst was over, and brighter days were coming for the poor ne'er-do-well. His *Enquiry* brought him considerable reputation, and better-paid work. In October 1759 he became sole contributor to *The Bee*, a paper on the model of Addison's *Spectator*, published by a bookseller of St. Paul's Churchyard, and in this paper appeared some of his most delightful essays. In 1760 he removed to respectable lodgings in Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, and was sought after by various booksellers. Much of his work was still hack-work, but it brought him in a fairly comfortable income, and enabled him to move in better society. Soon he began to make the acquaintance of the famous literary men of the day. We do not know the date of his first introduction to Johnson, but we know that Johnson came to supper with him at Wine Office Court on May 31, 1761. The two men, different as they were in habits and disposition, became attached friends. Goldsmith's sensitive nature often suffered severely under Johnson's rough treatment, and Johnson was often annoyed at Goldsmith's foolishness and childish vanity. But the sincere affection which each had for the other held their friendship firm.

Goldsmith was now established as a writer, and was earning an income of about £200 a year, mainly through a series of sketches which, under the title of *The Citizen of the World*, he contributed to a daily newspaper. He was induced to change his lodgings and live quietly in the country district of Islington, far from the temptations of the town. With ordinary prudence his life would now have been happy and free from care. He was able to relieve his dreary hack-work by other and more congenial toil, and had in hand two masterpieces

which were soon to be given to the world. He was received as an honoured member of the circle which contained Johnson, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds and the other famous members of "The Club."

But an income of five times the amount he was now earning would not have kept the careless, generous Irishman out of debt. He had a childish delight in fine clothes, and one of Boswell's best-known anecdotes of Johnson tells how the sage rebuked poor Goldy for his boastfulness concerning a new bloom-coloured coat, lately arrived from the tailor's. He could never say no to a needy acquaintance who begged for a loan, nor refrain from relieving misery when he saw it. Consequently he was always in debt to his publisher for money advanced on works yet to be written. At intervals he disappeared from his lodgings for short periods, to escape from angry creditors. The climax of his misfortunes came at the latter end of 1764, and the account of this incident is best given in the words of Johnson. "I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return; and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for £60. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

The novel which Johnson sold was *The Vicar of Wakefield*. The publisher probably accepted it on the great man's recommendation, and expecting no great things from it, put it on

one side until a convenient season for publication. Before that convenient season arrived, Goldsmith had, by common consent, passed from the ranks of talented and agreeable essayists into that occupied by men of genius. This was the result of the publication of his poem, *The Traveller*, which appeared in December 1764. Now, while all the town was talking about Goldsmith, was evidently the time for producing *The Vicar of Wakefield*. It appeared in March 1766, and thought it was not so immediately acclaimed as had been the case with *The Traveller*, it began, from the very first, quietly and surely to make its way. Its progress has gone on without a check, and to-day it stands in the front rank among the books that are admired, loved and read.

The Vicar of Wakefield is the sweet, pure and simple story of the life of a good man. It is not, like Richardson's *Pamela*, packed with conventional morality, and it is quite free from the coarseness which disfigures *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. When we look back over Oliver Goldsmith's life and think how great a part of it had been passed amid poverty, squalor, and crime ; when we remember that he was familiar with the lowest haunts of great cities and had lived side by side with thieves and with beggars, we cannot help wondering how he managed to write such a book as *The Vicar of Wakefield*. It is a testimony to the native innocence of his spirit, and to his natural affinity for things true and pure and lovely, as well as to his great genius. It proves how fondly he clung to the affections of his childhood, and how fragrant was the memory of his country home through all the later years. The quaint, delightful humour of the book is Goldsmith's own. His fun is sweeter, more delicate and more deliciously unconscious than even Addison's, and Sir Roger appears a trifle starched and a trifle sophisticated by the side of the dear old Vicar, whom no name could snit so well as that which Goldsmith has given him—Dr. Primrose. It is said that some of his traits are drawn from the author's own father, and he probably owes something to Fielding's Parson Adams. But his characteristic charm is all his own. It is difficult to pick out the scenes in

which he is shown to the best advantage, for he is always delightful. We see him first in his 'elegant house,' with his wife, whom he chose, "as she did her wedding-gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but for such qualities as would wear well," and his children, "the finest in the country." We follow him through all his losses and misfortunes, and find him the same kindly, humorous, quaintly wise Christian gentleman in his poverty as he was in the days of his wealth. The home life which is pictured throughout the book is perfect in its happy orderliness and its hearty enjoyment of simple pleasures. One of the most beautiful passages in the book describes the Vicar's return to his home, after a short absence. "And now my heart caught new sensations of pleasure, the nearer I approached that peaceful mansion. As a bird that had been frighted from its nest, my affections outwent my haste, and hovered round my little fireside with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to say, and anticipated the welcome I was to receive. I already felt my wife's tender embrace, and smiled at the joy of my little ones. As I walked but slowly the night waned apace. The labourers of the day were all retired to rest; the lights were out in every cottage; no sounds were heard but of the shrilling cock, and the deep-mouthed watch-dog, at hollow distance. I approached my little abode of pleasure, and, before I was within a furlong of the place, our honest mastiff came running to welcome me."

When the poor Vicar finds himself in a debtors' prison, neither his courage nor his charity forsakes him. The miserable condition of his fellow prisoners turns his thoughts from his own misfortunes, and he resolves to make an effort for the amendment of those whom he regards as his new parishioners. "I therefore read them a portion of the service with a loud, unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occasion. Lewd whispers, groans of contrition burlesqued, winking and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural solemnity to read on, sensible that what I did might mend some, but could itself receive no contamination from any."

Through all his heavy troubles he shows himself a true and brave man: and renewed prosperity finds him the same simple, trusting, kindly humorous being as before. We are glad that when we leave him he is happy once more, with the family he loves. He has celebrated the marriage of his eldest son, among the friends who have been faithful to him through his time of adversity, and, as soon as the wedding feast was over, "according to my old custom I requested that the table might be taken away to have the pleasure of seeing all my family once more by a cheerful fireside. My two little ones sat upon each knee, the rest of the company by their partners. I had nothing now on this side of the grave to wish for: all my cares were over; my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity."

So ends Goldsmith's beautiful prose idyll, which can scarcely be better described than in his own words. "There are an hundred faults in the thing, and an hundred things might be said to prove them beauties. But it is needless. A book may be amusing with numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity. The hero of this piece unites in himself the three greatest characters upon earth; he is a priest, an husbandman, and the father of a family. He is drawn as ready to teach, and ready to obey; as simple in affluence, and majestic in adversity. In this age of opulence and refinement whom can such a character please? Such as are fond of high life will turn with disdain from the simplicity of his country fireside; such as mistake ribaldry for humour will find no wit in his harmless conversation; and such as have been taught to deride religion will laugh at one whose chief stores of comfort are drawn from futurity." The words are true of every age; yet *The Vicar of Wakefield* has never wanted admirers. To write a story having for its hero an old country clergyman, which young and old shall read with eager interest, is no small achievement. And this, to his lasting fame, Goldsmith has done.

The last seven years of Goldsmith's life must be dealt with

very briefly. He wrote two plays—*The Good Natured Man*, and *She Stoops to Conquer*—and one great poem—*The Deserted Village*. All three have taken their places as English classics. He did also an enormous amount of hack-work, including compilations and abridgments. These, though they added nothing to his fame, brought him a considerable income. But, in spite of this, to the end of his life he was involved in debt and difficulties. He died in April 1774 of a nervous fever, which was largely due to the worry consequent upon the desperate state of his financial affairs. He was deeply mourned by all those who had loved him, and all those he had helped and loved. A group of wretched creatures whom he had relieved waited, we are told, on the stairs leading to his chambers, and burst into wild weeping when they heard that he was dead. The members of "The Club" mourned as for a brother. "Poor Goldsmith," wrote Johnson, "is gone. He died of a fever, exasperated as I believe, by the fear of distress. He raised money and squandered it by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense. But let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man."

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

EARLY in 1774 a new member, named Edward Gibbon, was admitted to "The Club." His qualifications for this honour were that he had published an *Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature* (written in French) and that he was known as an historian of vast attainments. He was, in 1774, thirty-seven years old, and was already beginning to show signs of the corpulency which marked him in after life. His manners were elaborate and formal, and his dress fastidiously precise. At the meetings of "The Club" he spoke seldom, except to make a quiet remark to his neighbour, or to comment in an undertone upon the proceedings of the other members. Several of these asides are recorded by Boswell. On one occasion the talk had turned on wild beasts, and Johnson had begun a monologue on bears, which he continued while the rest of the company carried on a general conversation. "At last, when a pause occurred, Johnson was going on: 'We are told that the black bear is innocent, but I should not like to trust myself with him.' Gibbon muttered in a low tone, 'I should not like to trust myself with *you*.'" We can well imagine that between the great doctor and the great historian there was little affinity, and that each tolerated the other only for the sake of their mutual friends, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Oliver Goldsmith. "The learned Gibbon," says Colman, "was a curious counterbalance to the learned (may I say the less learned) Johnson. Their manners and tastes, both in writing and conversation, were as different as their habiliments. On the day I first sat down with Johnson in his rusty-brown suit

and his black worsted stockings, Gibbon was placed opposite to me in a suit of flowered velvet, with a bag and sword. Each had his measured phraseology, and Johnson's famous parallel between Dryden and Pope might be loosely parodied in reference to himself and Gibbon. Johnson's style was grand, and Gibbon's elegant: the stateliness of the former was sometimes pedantic, and the latter was occasionally finical. Johnson marched to kettledrums and trumpets, Gibbon moved to flutes and hautboys. Johnson hewed passages through the Alps, while Gibbon levelled walks through parks and gardens. Mauled as I had been by Johnson, Gibbon poured balm upon my bruises by condescending once or twice in the course of the evening to talk with me. The great historian was light and playful, suiting his matter to the capacity of the boy: but it was done *more suo*—still his mannerism prevailed, still he tapped his snuff-box, still he smirked and smiled, and rounded his periods with the same air of good-breeding as if he were conversing with men. His mouth mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole nearly in the centre of his visage."

Gibbon had, at the time when he joined "The Club," been two years in London. The death of his father in November 1770 had left him with a small but sufficient fortune, and he was free to live his life as he chose. He took a house in Bentinck Street, Cavendish Square, "bid an everlasting farewell to the country," and with his books, "the most valuable of his effects," came up to town. "I had now," he wrote in his *Autobiography*, "attained the solid comforts of life—a convenient, well-furnished house, a domestic table, a dozen chosen servants, my own carriage, and all those decent luxuries whose value is the more sensibly felt the longer they are enjoyed. These advantages were crowned by the first of earthly blessings, independence. I was the absolute master of my hours and actions; nor was I deceived in the hope that the establishment of my library in town would allow me to divide the day between study and society."

Under such favourable circumstances Gibbon set about the

work the idea of which had been in his mind from his earliest youth. In his *Autobiography* he tells how the plan had gradually shaped itself in his mind. He records with regard to his sickly and studious boyhood, how "as often as I was tolerably exempt from danger and pain, reading, free desultory reading, was the employment and comfort of my solitary hours." "My indiscriminate appetite," he goes on, "subsided by degrees in the *Historic* line." In the summer of 1751 a volume of Echard's Roman history came into his hands. "To me the reigns of the successors of Constantine was absolutely new, and I was immersed in the passage of the Goths over the Danube, when the summons of the dinner-bell reluctantly dragged me from my intellectual feast." The enthusiasm thus aroused drove him on to further study. "Before I was sixteen I had exhausted all that could be learned in English of the Arabs and Persians, the Tartars and Turks; and the same ardour urged me to guess at the French of d'Herbelot, and to construe the barbarous Latin of Pocock's *Abulpharagius*."

This course of study was interrupted when, in 1752, Gibbon was sent to the University. "I arrived at Oxford," he says, "with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would have been ashamed," and "I entered on my new life at Magdalen College with surprise and satisfaction." But disappointment soon followed. "The University," he says, "will as gladly renounce me for her son as I shall disclaim her for my mother since I am compelled to acknowledge that the fourteen months which I spent in Magdalen College were totally lost for every purpose of study or improvement." Two years at Lausanne followed the fourteen months at Oxford. At Lausanne Gibbon was under the charge of a French pastor who wisely allowed him to follow his own bent in his studies. The fervour of learning, which the idleness and dissipation of his college career seemed to have cooled, now revived, and he pursued with ardour a course of study of the severest description. These two years were, he acknowledges, among the most fruitful of his life. "Such as I am, in Genius or learning or

Edward Gibbon
H. Walton
Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

manners, I owe my creation to Lausanne: it was in that school that the statue was discovered in the block of marble."

In 1758 he returned home, and soon afterward wrote his *Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature.* From 1759–62 he was chiefly occupied by his duties as an officer in the militia. Yet even under these circumstances he managed to maintain a keen interest in literature, and especially in history. He had resolved to write a great historical work, and he spent much time in the attempt to choose a suitable subject. The Crusade of Richard I, the Barons' Wars against John and Henry II, the lives of the Black Prince, Henry V, the Emperor Titus, Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh, and the history of the Swiss people were successively chosen and rejected.

When the militia was disbanded, toward the close of 1762 Gibbon started on a continental tour. In 1764 he arrived at the city whose history he was, later, to tell. "My temper," he says, "is not very susceptible of enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm I do not feel I have ever scorned to affect. But at the distance of twenty-five years I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the *eternal City.* After a sleepless night, I trod with a lofty step the ruins of the Forum; each memorable spot where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Cæsar fell, was at once present to my eye; and several days of intoxication were lost or enjoyed before I could descend to a cool and minute investigation." He had, as has been said, already determined to write an historical work. "It was the view of Italy and Rome which determined the choice of the subject. In my Journal the place and moment of conception are recorded: It was at Rome, on the fifteenth of October 1764, in the close of evening, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted fryars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind" but, "though my reading and reflections began to point towards that object, some years elapsed and several avocations intervened before

I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work."

The first volume of the history was not begun until Gibbon had settled down in London. Then he set to work in earnest. "At the outset all was dark and doubtful—even the title of the work, the true era of the decline and fall of the Empire, the limits of the introduction, the division of the chapters and the order of the narrative; and I was often tempted to cast away the labour of seven years. . . . Three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect. In the remainder of the way I advanced with a more equal and easy pace," and in June 1775 the volume was ready for the press. In the meantime Gibbon had entered Parliament, and his duties as a member had somewhat interfered with his literary work.

The first impression of a thousand copies was exhausted in a few days, and a second, third and fourth edition called for. "My book was on every table, and almost on every toilette; the historian was crowned by the taste or fashion of the day: nor was the general voice disturbed by the barking of any profane critic. . . ." Gibbon, however, derived most pleasure from the praise given him by the two great historians, David Hume, the first volume of whose *History of England* had been published in 1754, and William Robertson, the author of *The History of Scotland during the Reigns of Mary and James VI*, published 1759. "A letter from Mr. Hume," he says, "overpaid the labour of ten years; but I have never presumed to accept a place in the triumvirate of British historians."

Five more years of steady hard work saw the second and third volumes of the history completed, and carried the story down to the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. This was all that Gibbon had included in his original plan, but after thinking over the matter for about a year, he decided to carry on his narrative further and give the history of the Roman Empire established by Constantine in the East, up to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. But he did not immediately take

the work in hand. He was growing tired of his life in London and was meditating a change. He had during the two years he had spent at Lausanne formed a friendship with a young Swiss gentleman named Deyverdun, and this friendship had been maintained through all his later life. The two friends now proposed to set up a joint establishment in Deyverdun's large and commodious house which overlooked the Lake of Geneva. In 1783 the plan was carried out. "Since my establishment at Lausanne," wrote Gibbon, in 1790, "more than seven years have elapsed, and if every day has not been equally soft and serene, not a day, not a moment has occurred in which I have repented of my choice. The hurry of my departure, the joy of my arrival, the delay of my tools suspended the progress of my labours, and a full twelvemonth was lost before I could resume the thread of regular and daily industry." After this interval, however, the work went on rapidly, and by 1787 the sixth volume was finished. "I presumed," says Gibbon, in words which have been quoted so often as to have become familiar to all students, "to mark the moment of conception: I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather the night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all Nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the idea that I had taken my everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that, whatsoever might be the future date of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious."

The great work was finished; and it is necessary to consider

it in its completeness in order to realize how truly great it is. It deals with the greatest event that the history of the world has seen. Gibbon considers the fall of the Roman Empire in all its far-reaching effects on the thought, beliefs, morals, politics and civilization of the world. His narrative covers thirteen centuries and brings us out of the old pagan world, across the great tracts of the Middle Ages to the borders of that modern world in which we live to-day. We advance with a steady, even movement, without haste or agitation. The great panorama of history is unfolded before us, and scene follows scene in regular succession, each bringing the story a stage further on its way.

The fullness and accuracy which distinguish all parts of Gibbon's vast work have filled his critics with amazement. "That Gibbon should ever be displaced," says Mr. Freeman, "seems impossible. . . We may correct and improve from the stores that have been opened since Gibbon's time; we may write again large parts of his story from other and often truer and more wholesome points of view, but the work of Gibbon as a whole, as the encyclopædic history of 1300 years, as the grandest of historical designs, carried out alike with wonderful power and with wonderful accuracy, must ever keep its place. Whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read too."

In July 1787 Gibbon came to England to superintend the publication of the last three volumes of his work. He returned to Lausanne in 1788, to find his friend Deyverdun in rapidly failing health. In July 1789 Deyverdun died. Gibbon missed him sorely, and never got over his loss. The house by the Lake of Geneva became distasteful to him though he could not make up his mind to leave it. He attempted no more work, and even his books were neglected. The great Revolution, then proceeding in France, filled him with alarm and horror. Soon his health began to fail, and for months at a time he was helpless with gout. Want of exercise and indulgence in unsuitable diet had made him a marvel of unwieldy corpulence. Yet he bore his ills with the cheerfulness of a philosopher, and tried hard to maintain his enjoyment of the

good things within his grasp. But soon still heavier troubles fell. Friend after friend was lost to him by death, and when at last he heard that the wife of Lord Sheffield, with whom he had "for years lived on terms of the most affectionate intimacy," was dead, Gibbon suddenly resolved to go to England to attempt to console his friend. To a man in his state of health the journey was a difficult and a dangerous one, but he accomplished it in safety. He spent the summer with Lord Sheffield, and seemed to be rather better than he had been at Lausanne. But toward the end of the year he was attacked by the illness which soon brought him to his end. He died on January 16, 1794.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

EVELINA

IN the tiny paved court that lay behind a house in Poland Street, London, on the afternoon of June 13, 1768, a small tragedy was being enacted. Up in the corner of the court, out of sight of the windows of the house, there burnt a fire made of dried sticks and paper. By the fire stood two girls. One was a sweet-faced little maiden of twelve, who looked awed and miserable and ready to cry. The face of the other girl expressed not so much sorrow as grim determination. She was small and slight, and although this was her sixteenth birthday, she looked little older than the sister who stood at her side. She held a bundle of papers covered with her own neat handwriting, and these she threw one by one upon the fire, watching steadfastly with her soft, short-sighted eyes as the flames caught them and they turned to blackened ashes. As the last paper fell the little sister began to cry piteously. The elder girl put her arm lovingly round her, and, silent and sorrowful, the two went back into the house.

The days that followed this solemn and tremendous sacrifice were sad ones for the poor authoress, who, from a stern sense of duty had devoted her treasure to destruction. Susan the dear sympathetic sister, soon recovered her spirits, but Fanny, the elder, still mourned. The poems and stories that she had spent all her leisure time during five or six years in writing, were gone, and, worse than this, she must not attempt to write any more. "The old lady"—as Fanny, from her shy and demure ways, was called in the household—had always loved scribbling and 'making up.' Though she was the dunce of the family, and had not learnt to read until she was

eight years old, she was always able to delight her brothers and sisters with a story 'out of her own head.' She had, in a manner, educated herself. Her mother had died when she was nine years old, and though her two sisters had been sent to a school in France, Fanny, for various reasons, had been kept at home. Her father, Dr. Burney, was the most popular music-master of fashionable London, and his professional engagements kept him busy from morning to night. He loved his children dearly, and they adored him, but he gave them little care or attention. So Fanny spent her days very happily, reading in his library, writing long descriptive letters to an old friend of the family whom the children called 'Daddy' Crisp, and scribbling her stories. Her evenings were often gay enough, for Dr. Burney knew most of the notabilities of London, and was a favourite in every circle to which he was introduced. His modest drawing-room was often crowded with a company as brilliant as genius and talent could make it, and his shy observant daughter from her quiet corner looked out over a wider and more fruitful field of study than any of her books could afford. How well she used her opportunities, her letters, which escaped the fate we have seen overtake her other writings, still show. The airs and oddities of each member of the company were marked and remembered. Fanny had a fine, though a quiet sense of humour and a gift of mimicry which, though she was too shy to exhibit it to strangers, was well known to her intimate friends.

But when Fanny was fifteen years old her father married again. The new step-mother was a stately, handsome, clever lady, who was anxious to do her very best for her husband's six children. She made the home a far more orderly and comfortable place than it had been for years, she took charge of the girls' education, and tried to train them up in all useful household arts. It was not long before she found out that Fanny spent a great part of her time in 'scribbling.' For a time Mrs. Burney said nothing, but one day when the three girls—Hetty, the eldest daughter, Fanny, and Susan—were

busy with their sewing, she took the opportunity of speaking to them about the position of literary women of the day. She pointed out that the crowd of lady writers who had tried to follow in the steps of Richardson and Fielding had, for the most part, failed to do more than provide worthless books for idle readers; that many of their works had a degrading and immoral tendency, and that consequently the whole class of lady novelists had received an ill name; that a girl who took up writing as a profession ran the risk of identifying herself with a class so lightly esteemed, and had little chance of gaining fame or fortune. The words, wisely and kindly spoken, greatly impressed poor Fanny, and the result was the bonfire that has been described.

But as she sat at the stitching which now occupied most of her morning hours, Fanny could not help thinking of the stories that had been burnt. There was one in particular that she had dearly loved. It was about Caroline Evelyn, a beautiful and charming young lady, the daughter of a high-born gentleman who had married a barmaid. Caroline had been brought up by her father's old tutor, the Rev. Mr. Villars, and was as refined as she was lovely. After a time her mother had claimed her, and had taken her to live in France. Tortured by the vulgarity of her surroundings, she had listened, only too willingly, to the advances of a wicked baronet, who had married and then deserted her. Caroline, with her infant daughter had taken refuge with Mr. Villars, and at his house the broken-hearted mother had died. The plot was made up of the stock elements which novelists had used over and over again, but the characters were dear to Fanny's heart. While she stitched industriously at her father's shirts she could not help thinking of the little motherless girl whom Caroline Evelyn had left behind, and picturing her as she grew up and came to know her high-born wicked father and her vulgar, Frenchified grandmother. For a long time, however, Fanny wrote no more stories. She was docile by nature, and her good sense showed her the wisdom in her stepmother's kindly given advice. But the need to express on paper the results of

Fanny Burney 364

From a Portrait by her Brother

Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

her observation grew urgent. She wrote longer and longer letters to Daddy Crisp—letters that delighted the old man, who was living the life of a hermit at an old house at Chessington, near Epsom. But letters were not enough. A little while before burning her stories she had hit on the idea of keeping a diary. There could be no possible harm in going on with that, she thought. Into her diary went all her impressions—sketches of the visitors who came to her father's house, accounts of family happenings, tales of little adventures at home and abroad, criticisms of the books she read, and the plays she witnessed. "I cannot express," she wrote, "the pleasure I have in writing down my thoughts, at the very moment—my opinion of people when I first see them, and how I alter or confirm myself in it." The diary was begun in May 1768, and was from the first full and detailed. Early in 1774 the Burneys moved into a larger house, at No. 1 St. Martin's Street, Leicester Square, a house where Sir Isaac Newton had once lived, and where, at the top, was a little wooden turret room, with many windows and a tiny fireplace, said to be his observatory. Fanny at once made this her own special sanctum, and after dutifully performing in the morning those prodigies of fine needlework which the age deemed essential for a properly brought-up young lady, she escaped to it as often as she could in the afternoon, and wrote. At first she wrote only her diary and her letters, but soon the desire of writing a story grew too strong to be resisted. She was now a young lady of twenty-two, though she was still small and childish-looking, and she felt that she might reasonably act according to her own judgment. The fate of the hapless Caroline Evelyn had never been forgotten, and the story of her daughter was in Fanny's head, all ready to be written down. Since that June afternoon which had seen the sacrifice of her early manuscript, Fanny's powers of characterization had greatly increased. Visitors crowded to the house in St. Martin's Street, and there was scarcely a day without its opportunity for a character sketch. To give a complete list of the eminent men and women whom Fanny Burney saw in her father's house would

be impossible. There was Garrick, the actor, who ran in and out of the house at all hours, and was the idol of the children; there was Sir Joshua Reynolds, the artist, and Joseph Nollekins, the sculptor, with a host of others. Distinguished professional singers also were glad to visit Dr. Burney, who stood high in his profession both as a teacher, and as a writer on musical subjects; and almost all the foreigners of distinction who passed through London were seen at his house. Of all these, and of many more, Fanny gives lively portraits in her diary. She tells, too, of visits to the theatre, to Ranelagh and other places of public amusement. Everywhere her keen eyes were open, and she had the faculty of taking in, almost at a glance, the individual traits which marked out those she met.

With this mass of accumulated material she sat down to write her novel. She called her heroine Evelina, and gave to her all the virtues, beauties and accomplishments that had been possessed by her unfortunate mother, Caroline Evelyn. The story, like Richardson's *Pamela*, is given in the form of letters, and most of these are written by Evelina herself. The plot is very slight, its interest turning chiefly on the complications which follow when Evelina, gently born and bred, is claimed by her vulgar grandmother, Madame Duval, and is introduced by her to friends and connexions as vulgar as herself. In the end the wicked baronet, Evelina's father, is overcome by the grace and beauty of his daughter, and by her likeness to her dead mother: he receives her with tears of repentance, and Evelina is happily married to Lord Orville, who has been faithful to her through many trials and misunderstandings. The value of the book, however, lies in its character sketches, and among these the sketches of Madame Duval and the ill-bred members of her circle are certainly the best.

The *History of Evelina*, however, proceeded but slowly. Dr. Burney was now preparing for the press his long-planned *History of Music*, and day after day Fanny sat making a fair copy of his rough manuscript. In 1770 and in 1772 Dr. Burney visited the Continent to collect material for his book,

and was absent some months, and during these periods his daughter's work made great progress. Some of it was doubtless written at Chessington, where Fanny paid frequent visits to her kind Daddy Crisp ; but in the main *Evelina* is associated with that small turret room to which Fanny stole away whenever she could escape from her other duties, and from the watchful eye of her stepmother.

Dr. Burney's *History of Music* was published in 1776, and it was perhaps the help that she gave to her father while the book was passing through the press that first made Fanny think—doubtfully, fearfully and secretly—that her own *Evelina* might one day appear in print. She had by this time written two volumes of her work, and was engaged on the third. After much inward debate, the great resolution was taken, and Fanny made up her mind to attempt the publication of her book. She was nervously anxious, however, not to be known as its author. She thought that the printers might have become familiar with her handwriting through seeing it on the sheets of her father's work, so she copied out the whole of *Evelina* in a disguised hand, sitting up the greater part of many nights to get it finished. Her sisters were by this time in her confidence, and together the girls decided to write to the publisher Dodsley, offering the two volumes already completed. The publisher replied that he could not consider any work of which the author's name was withheld. A new publisher must be tried, and this time the conclave of sisters decided to address one who was of less consequence in the literary world. They decided, also, to take their youngest brother, Charles, then nineteen years old, into their confidence. So one evening Charles was secretly summoned to his sisters' room, wrapped up and disguised after the best fashion they could manage, and entrusted with the precious parcel of manuscript, which he was to carry to Mr. Lowndes of Fleet Street. Then came an interval of suspense. At last a letter from Mr. Lowndes was forwarded to "Mr. Grafton, The Orange Coffee House, Haymarket,"—the name and address that Fanny Burney had given. On the whole, he said he thought

favourably of the manuscript submitted to him, but he could not think of arranging for publication until he had seen the whole of the story.

So Fanny, with some groans, set to work again. Her time was so fully occupied that she had scarcely time to write half a page a day. A visit to Chessington, however, gave her more leisure. "Distant as you may think us from the great world," she wrote to Susan, "I sometimes find myself in the midst of it, though nobody suspects the brilliancy of the company I occasionally keep." She was probably at this time writing the account of Evelina's sojourn at Bath, where the last act of the drama takes place, and where her high-born friends and admirers are assembled, including the all-conquering Lord Orville, and the wicked but repentant father, Sir John Belmont. Soon after Fanny's return to St. Martin's Street the book was finished. But now that the decisive moment had come she felt that she could not take the important step of publishing her novel without her father's permission. In fear and trembling she told him she had written a book, and a publisher had been found willing to take it. The admission greatly amused Dr. Burney. That his quiet 'old lady' should aspire to literary fame seemed to him the best of jokes. He promised secrecy, and did not trouble to inquire any further into the matter.

In April 1777 the book was sent to Mr. Lowndes, and twenty pounds, in payment, was received by Fanny. "This year," she wrote in her diary for 1778, "was ushered in by a grand and most important event,—for at the latter end of January the literary world was favoured with the first publication of the ingenious, learned, and most profound Fanny Burney. I doubt not but this memorable affair will, in future, mark the period whence chronologers will date the zenith of the polite arts in this island. The admirable authoress has named her most elaborate performance *Evelina; or, a young Lady's Entrance into the World.*"

It was advertised anonymously in the *London Chronicle*, and Mrs. Burney innocently read out the announcement at

the breakfast table, while Fanny held down her head and blushed, and Susan and Charlotte exchanged awed, delighted glances.

Soon the book found its way to the circulating libraries. "I have an exceedingly odd sensation," wrote Fanny, "when I consider that it is now in the power of *any* and *every*body to read what I so carefully hoarded even from my best friends, till the last month or two." In June Dr. Burney, being reminded by the notice in the *London Chronicle*, bought a copy of his daughter's work, and read the introductory ode in which it was dedicated to him. The verses have no poetic value, but they touched and delighted the fond father. The writer lauds the "Author of her being," and wishes that her work were worthy of her parentage:

> But since my niggard stars that gift refuse,
> Concealment is the only boon I claim;
> Obscure be still the unsuccessful muse,
> Who cannot raise, but would not sink thy fame.

Susan reports to Fanny who is then at Chessington how she and Charlotte listened outside their father's bedroom door and heard him reading the book to his wife. "It was near twelve," she adds, "before we breakfasted." Then comes the father's verdict. "It is the best novel I know excepting Fielding's"; and a little later, "The schtoff (stuff) reads better the second time than the first, and thou hast made thy old father laugh and cry at thy pleasure." Next Susan writes that the book has been praised by that great literary dictator, Dr. Johnson. "There are passages in it, the great man declares, which might do honour to Richardson." This news sends Fanny wild with delight. "Dr. Johnson's approbation! it almost crazed me with agreeable surprise,—it gave me such a flight of spirits that I danced a jigg to Mr. Crisp, without any preparation, music or explanation—to his no small amazement and diversion." Mr. Crisp was not yet in the secret. Fanny had been reading *Evelina* to him, and he had grown deeply interested in the story, but he knew nothing of its author until Dr. Burney when he came in August to fetch Fanny home,

delighted his old friend with the tale of his favourite's fame.

On her return to London Fanny Burney found herself already a noted figure in initiated circles, and gradually, as the secret of the authorship of *Evelina* became widely known, the lion of literary society. She was invited to Streatham, to the house of Dr. Johnson's friend, Mrs. Thrale, and there she met the great man himself. She had seen him before at her father's house, but he had taken little notice of the quiet, shrinking girl who did nothing to attract his attention. Now he exulted over his 'little Burney,' sang her praises everywhere, and treated her in a fatherly, caressing fashion which she found highly flattering. His keen and trained judgment saw that *Evelina* really marked a distinct stage in the evolution of the novel. With discriminating playfulness he called Fanny a "little charactermonger," hitting at once on the chief merit of her work. It is as a "charactermonger" that she occupies a place in literary history.

Praises of *Evelina* continued to pour in. "Do, Mr. Lowndes, give me *Evelina*," the ladies said, "I am treated as unfashionable for not having read it." Sir Joshua Reynolds sat up all night to finish it. "Burke doats on it; he began it one morning at seven o'clock and could not leave it a moment; he sat up all night reading it. He says he has not seen such a book he can't tell when." "Are they all mad," exclaimed happy Fanny Burney, "or do they want to make me so."

Here, at the height of her triumph we must leave the young authoress, briefly summarizing the remaining events of her long life. In 1782 she published a second novel, *Cecilia*, which is superior to *Evelina* in construction and plot, but lacks something of the freshness of the earlier work. Miss Burney's fame now attracted royal notice, and in July 1786 she received an appointment as Junior Keeper of the Robes. This appointment she held for five years, during which time she wrote nothing. In 1791 she resigned her office, and in 1793 she married General D'Arblay, a French refugee. In 1796 she published a third novel, *Camilla*, which shows a

great falling off in power. In 1801, after the Peace of Amiens, she accompanied her husband to France, and remained in that country for ten years. In 1814 her fourth novel, *The Wanderer*, appeared. This book, from a literary point of view, was a failure, though three thousand six hundred copies were sold at two guineas each in six months. Its sale was due to its author's popularity, and declined as the book became known. Madame D'Arblay occupied her last years in editing the *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, compiled from his letters and papers. She died in January 1840, at the age of eighty-seven.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE TASK

HUNTINGDON in the latter half of the eighteenth century was a small and quiet country town, to which few strangers came, and where life was dull and uneventful. It was natural, therefore, that when in June 1765 a young man with his servant took lodgings in one of its drowsy streets, considerable interest should be aroused. The young man was evidently gently born and bred. He had a broad, intellectual forehead, sensitive and refined features, and a general appearance of extreme delicacy. His face wore a rapt, uplifted expression, as if his eyes looked on things more wonderful and beautiful than those in the common world about him; his manners were gentle, and his whole demeanour full of calm cheerfulness. Little was known about him, except that his name was William Cowper, that he had a brother living at Cambridge, twenty miles away, and that he had come to Huntingdon to recover from the effects of a severe illness. But of the nature of the malady the good folk of Huntingdon knew nothing. They did not guess that the stranger whose gentle winning countenance excited their interest had but lately suffered all the agonies of acute religious melancholia; that he had attempted to take his own life; that he had passed eighteen months in a private asylum for those afflicted with mental disorders; and that he had told of his sufferings in some of the most heart-rending and terrible verses that ever came from a tormented human soul.

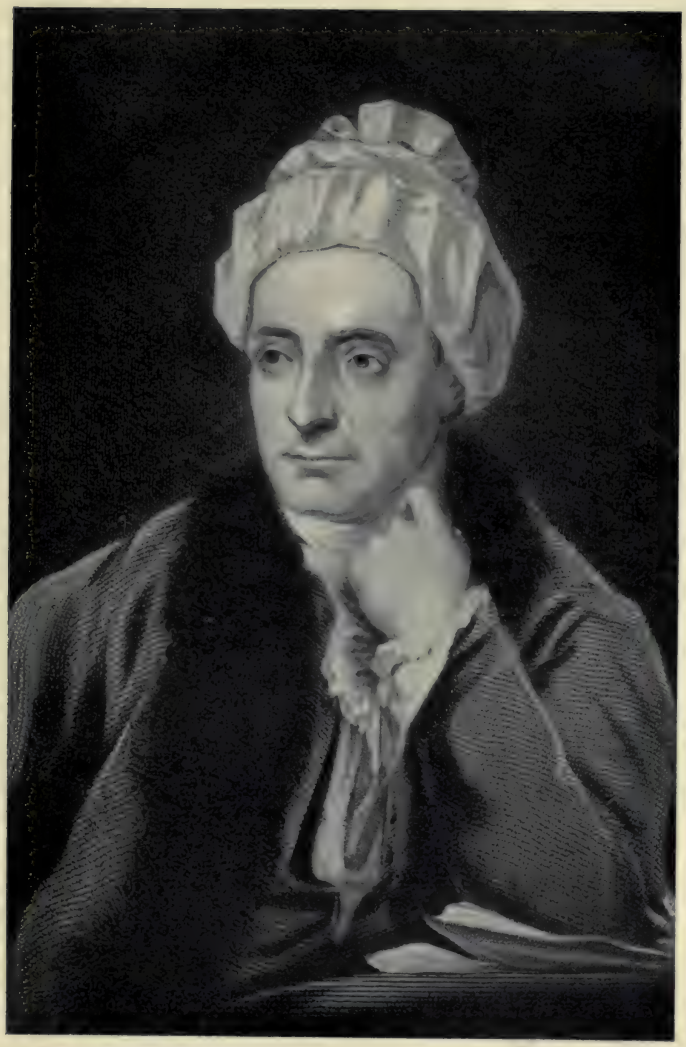
Yet so it was, and the serene happiness that now possessed him had been won in this great struggle. In his madness it had been the fear of the wrath of God that had made his

torture, and the assurance of God's forgiveness had come with his cure. Cowper had experienced what, in those days when Wesley's preaching was awakening all England, men were not afraid or ashamed to call conversion. The wise and kind treatment of his physician had gradually brought healing to his poor, tormented mind, until, one morning, as he himself tells us, he woke up, feeling cheerful and composed. He took up his Bible, which during his fits of madness he had not borne to look at, and read a verse in the Epistle to the Romans. "Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made, my pardon in His blood, and the fullness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed and received the Gospel." His conversion brought with it complete recovery, and Cowper was still in the rapturous, exalted frame of mind produced by this great mental and spiritual awakening when he came to Huntingdon.

His happiness was perfect. His eyes seemed to have been opened so that he saw new beauties in everything around him, and a new glory over all the earth. The flat, fen country charmed his eyes, the sluggish Ouse was a river of delight. Simple pleasures sufficed him—his morning bathe, his rides toward Cambridge to meet his brother, his solitary walks, his rapturous reveries. Several families in the town made advances to him, and pressed him to join in the small gaieties which country society provided. But to the strict Evangelical, such as Cowper had become, the gaieties savoured of sin. He met his fellows only at church, and even there the spiritual ecstasy in which he was wrapped made him almost unconscious of their presence; and he talked only to a few 'odd scrambling fellows' whom he met in his daily walks.

But gradually the raptures began to fade. The sensitive spirit, which joy had raised so high, sank quickly when the reaction came. Religion seemed less satisfying, and "the communion which I had so long been able to maintain with the Lord was suddenly interrupted." Cowper began to long

for some kindly human companionship and to dread the gloomy winter, so quickly coming on. His face lost its look of happiness; his whole manner became dejected. One day, after morning service, he was walking sadly along by the trees that bordered the churchyard, when a stranger came up and spoke to him. It did not take the two long to assure themselves that they were in sympathy on many points. The stranger introduced himself as William Unwin, son of a clergyman living in Huntingdon. He was preparing to take holy orders, and was as strongly Evangelical in his views as Cowper himself. He invited Cowper to his home, and, cheered and refreshed by the meeting, Cowper consented to go. It was a home after his own heart, devoutly religious and quietly cheerful. To his friend's mother the visitor at once felt a strong attraction. Mrs. Unwin was grave, precise, almost austere in manner, and she had the true Evangelical hatred of frivolity and display. Her conversation had a touch of sanctimoniousness, and she had adopted all the prejudices that distinguished the religious party to which she belonged. Yet under all this lay the same quiet gaiety of spirit that distinguished Cowper himself in his happier moments. She loved, as he did, the small occupations and the calm joys of home; and the tender tact that comes from a true sympathy taught her how to approach this gentle beautiful nature, so unfit, as she saw, to meet the stern realities of life. "I met Mrs. Unwin in the street," Cowper wrote soon after their first introduction, "and went home with her. She and I walked together near two hours in the garden, and had a conversation which did me more good than I should have received from an audience with the first prince in Europe. That woman is a blessing to me, and I never see her without being the better for her company." Soon it was suggested that he should live as a boarder in the house of the Unwins, and he received the suggestion with the deepest gratitude. He longed for a home, and he longed for sympathy in his spiritual life; both of these he would find with the Unwins. The plan, too, would lessen his expenses, and this was a matter of consequence to him



William Cowper

since he depended entirely upon a small income which the different members of his family subscribed to give him. Before the end of the year he was established as one of the Unwin household, and wrote thus of his new life: "We breakfast commonly between eight and nine; till eleven, we read either the Scripture or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day, and from twelve to three we separate and amuse ourselves as we please. During that interval, I either read in my own apartment, or walk or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but if the weather permits, adjourn to the garden, where, with Mrs. Unwin and her son I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. If it rains, or is too windy for walking, we either converse within doors or sing some hymns of Martin's collection, and by the help of Mrs. Unwin's harpsichord, make up a tolerable concert, in which our hearts I hope are the best performers. After tea we sally forth to walk in good earnest. Mrs. Unwin is a good walker, and we have generally travelled about four miles before we see home again. When the days are short, we make this excursion in the former part of the day, between church-time and dinner. At night we read and converse as before till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon, and last of all the family are called to prayers. I need not tell you that such a life as this is consistent with the utmost cheerfulness; accordingly we are all happy, and dwell together in unity as brethren." It was not perhaps the best kind of life that Cowper, with his tendency to religious melancholy, could have led. But the love and care which surrounded him made up for much, and there was, perhaps, more incidental relaxation and merriment than his account would lead us to suppose.

In July 1767 Mr. Unwin was killed by a fall from his horse. His son had already left Huntingdon to take up work elsewhere. Only Cowper and Mrs. Unwin were left. Their attachment had by this time grown so strong that neither could bear to think of separation. They resolved to remove

from Huntingdon, and take a house together in another place. For some time they debated as to where they should go. It must be a place where there was a pious Evangelical minister; for other things they cared little. Chance decided the matter for them. Mr. John Newton, vicar of Olney in Buckinghamshire, was asked by a friend of Mrs. Unwin's son to call upon them. He was a noted Evangelical preacher, one of the foremost figures of the revival, and had had a strange and eventful career. He had been a sailor, had been shipwrecked, had fallen into the hands of a slave-dealer and suffered almost every conceivable misery. He had been converted as the result of a marvellous escape from drowning, and had afterward himself become a slave-dealer. Being convinced of the evil nature of his trade, he had given it up, and after many difficulties had been ordained a minister of the Church of England. The ardour that possessed him showed itself in his work, and, as he said himself, "his name was up about the country for preaching people mad."

It was this robust, stern yet not unkindly nature under whose influence Cowper and Mrs. Unwin now fell. When he urged them to come with him to Olney they agreed at once, and took the house which stood next to his own. It was a miserable dwelling, gloomy, damp and dilapidated, standing in the poorest quarter of the poor town. Olney, indeed, was little better than a village, and there were no inhabitants of a social rank equal to that of Cowper and Mrs. Unwin. The poor, half-starved lacemakers, who formed the chief part of the population crowded together in their unhealthy houses, built on the low banks of the marshy Ouse. There were few pleasant walks, and everywhere the air was heavy with mists from the river.

As compensation for all these disadvantages the two newcomers had the society of the Reverend John Newton and his wife. A gate was opened between the gardens of the two houses, so that the dwellers could pass freely from one to another, and Mr. Newton at once took the lives of his neighbours under his direction. The day was spent in religious

exercises and in visiting the poor; all intercourse with the outside world, even by letter, was gradually discontinued. There were few books to be found in either household, for Cowper's library had been sold before the removal from Huntingdon. Newton's misguided zeal urged his follower into courses which were destructive to his mental and his bodily health. The shy, sensitive Cowper, to whom any public utterance was little short of agony, was induced to speak of his spiritual experiences at prayer-meetings, and to exhort to repentance, jeering, half-brutalized labourers. He had at first described the life at Olney as "a decided course of Christian happiness," and in his religious fervour he was willing to attempt all that his mentor required of him. But the strain was too great, and in 1773 it brought about a complete mental breakdown. He was tortured by the belief that his soul was lost, he was unable to pray, and in his despair he once more attempted to take his life. The kind and skilful care of the experienced physician who had before attended him might have saved him from a second attack of madness; but to John Newton the disorder was the work of Satan, and the enemy was to be met with spiritual weapons only. Mrs. Unwin entirely agreed, and with the most wonderful devotion the two tended their unhappy friend. The heaviest part of the burden fell on Mrs. Unwin. She lived alone with Cowper in the melancholy house, attempting to combat his delusions, and bearing with heroic patience his reproaches for the hatred which he persisted in believing that she bore him. At last, after nearly eighteen months, the physician was called in, and under his skilled treatment Cowper recovered.

The delicate balance of the brain was restored, and now the aim of Cowper's faithful and devoted nurse was to preserve him from the stress and strain of mental effort, and especially from the religious excitement that had proved so dangerous. It was perhaps a happy thing for Cowper that at this time John Newton left Olney, and though he continued to guide and direct the followers he had left behind, by means of letters, his personal influence was removed. Mrs. Unwin was left

alone with her charge. She tended him with a wisdom such as devoted love alone could have taught her. Some light occupation she knew he must have, and gardening, carpentering, and drawing were successively tried. The tame hares—Tiny, Puss, and Bess—who are so well known to us through Cowper's delightful descriptions, helped him to pass many hours with quiet enjoyment. But none of these things gave employment to the fine powers of his brain, and it was the habit of introspective self-torture that Mrs. Unwin dreaded. She therefore urged him to take up seriously the writing of poetry. He was at this time nearly fifty years old, and though he had written verses in his youth, as well as some hymns for a collection made by John Newton, he had read little poetry and knew nothing of its technicalities. But he readily took up Mrs. Unwin's suggestion, and conferred with her on the choice of a subject. Something in the nature of a didactic poem, would, she thought, be best suited to his powers, and she suggested *The Progress of Error*. Upon this subject Cowper therefore began to write, and when he had finished, went on with a series of Moral Satires—*Truth, Table Talk, Expostulation, Hope, Charity, Conversation, Retirement.* The plan of each poem was sent to Mr. Newton for his approval, and signs of his influence may be seen throughout. As poetry these efforts do not rank high. They fulfilled their purpose of distracting Cowper's mind from the contemplation of his own spiritual condition, but they did not call out his highest powers.

The home at Olney was now once more serene and cheerful. Cowper's health continued to mend, and the charming playfulness which, almost more than anything else, makes him such a human lovable character to us to-day, began slowly to revive. The letters which he wrote at this period are among his best productions, merry, affectionate and full of delightful intimate chit-chat about the trifles that made up his life. They show just the qualities which are absent from the Moral Sati s.

In 1781 a new interest and source of inspiration came into Cowper's life. He was looking out of the window on one fine morning when he saw two ladies crossing the street. One of

them he knew ; she was Mrs. Jones, the wife of a neighbouring clergyman. The appearance and air of the other lady so greatly attracted him that he begged Mrs. Unwin to go out at once and ask them to take tea at the house that afternoon. They came, and Cowper, his natural shyness returning upon him, was afraid to go down to meet them ; but summoning his courage he at last made his appearance, and the four spent a most delightful evening. The lady, he found, was Lady Austen, sister to Mrs. Jones and widow of a baronet. She had travelled, and had lived for some time in France, had been much in society and could talk with a bright vivacity that won Cowper's heart. The two soon became great friends. He called her Sister Anne, read his poems to her, and was delighted with her critical comments. She amused and cheered him in every way in her power, watching his moods, and sparing no pains to rouse him from his constantly recurring fits of depression. She sang to him, told him stories, and drew him on to talk on the subjects that interested him most. One evening, when she saw that gloom seemed settling upon him she told him a story about a London draper who, starting out for a holiday on horseback, met with all sorts of amusing mishaps in a method of travelling to which he was quite unaccustomed. The story tickled Cowper immensely, and the other inmates of the house heard peal after peal of laughter coming from his room after he had gone to bed. In the morning he brought down the first draft of the poem of *John Gilpin*.

The new friendship rapidly ripened, and Lady Austen made up her mind to come for a time to live at Olney. She took the house which had been John Newton's, and once more the garden way was opened, and the two households lived on terms of closest intimacy. "From a scene of the most uninterrupted retirement," Cowper writes, "we have passed at once into a state of constant engagement. Not that our society is much multiplied ; the addition of an individual has made all this difference. Lady Austen and we pass our days alternately at each other's chateau. In the morning I walk with one or other of the ladies, and in the evening wind thread. Thus did

Hercules, and thus probably did Samson, and thus do I; and were both those heroes living, I should not fear to challenge them to a trial of skill in that business, or doubt to beat them both."

Before long Lady Austen suggested to Cowper that he should begin another long poem, and should try his hand at blank verse. "What shall I write about?" he asked. "Oh, you can never be in want of a subject, you can write upon anything. Write," she said, "upon this sofa." Cowper accepted her suggestion, and began his work. He called it *The Task*, because, as he wrote in his opening lines, "The Fair commands the song." The first book he called *The Sofa*, and he traced the evolution of this piece of furniture from three-legged stools through stools with four legs, cane-seated chairs, elbow chairs, to its perfected form:

> So slow
> The growth of what is excellent; so hard
> To obtain perfection in this nether world.
> Thus first Necessity invented stools,
> Convenience next suggested elbow chairs
> And Luxury the accomplish'd Sofa last.

From this he passed to those who used the sofa, and from thence, by a somewhat forced transition, to those who have no need of sofas, but can wander about and view the country as they please. This gave him an opportunity for some of those pictures of country scenes in which he is always at his best. All the little details are noted of that prospect where:

> Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
> Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
> Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
> Delighted.

The moral of it all, and indeed of the whole poem, is contained in the famous passage with which this book concludes, and which begins, "God made the country, and man made the town."

The second book is called *The Timepiece*, but bears little reference to its title. It is really a dissertation on patriotism and good government:

> England, with all they faults, I love thee still,
> My country! and while yet a nook is left,
> Where English minds and manners may be found,
> Shall be constrained to love thee.

Book III is called *The Garden*. Its general theme is domestic happiness, and it treats in detail those outdoor occupations by means of which a dweller in the country can pass his time profitably and happily. Incidentally, Cowper tells something of his own life and fortunes :

> I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
> Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd
> My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
> To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
> There was I found by one who had himself
> Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,
> And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
> With gentle force soliciting the darts,
> He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live.
> Since then, with few associates, in remote
> And silent woods I wander, far from those
> My former partners of the peopled scene ;
> With few associates, and not wishing more.

By the time he had reached the end of Book III, Cowper had become accustomed to his new medium of blank verse, and was using it with freedom and ease. His enthusiasm was rising. The obligation to be "moral" and "improving" which had lain so heavily upon him as he wrote the first three books, and which was responsible for so many bald passages was lightening. In the last three books he ventured to be his own natural self ; and the results are delightful. It is on these three books—*The Winter Evening*, *The Winter Morning Walk*, *The Winter Walk at Noon*, that his reputation as the poet who led the revolt against the artificial school of Pope is chiefly founded. For pictures of simple, common scenes, of homely joys, and ordinary occupations there never had been anything like these poems of Cowper's. The country round about Olney is, as has been said, flat and uninteresting ; yet in his faithful, loving pictures it has a quiet charm. The fresh air of heaven blows freely over it, and it is full of those kindly human associations which would endear any landscape to our eyes. The care given to each trifling detail, the simple lucid language which so faithfully reproduces what the eye has seen, the spirit of quiet enjoyment shed over all—it is to these things that Cowper's poetry owes its charm. It would be superfluous

to quote here the most noted passages in the last three books of *The Task*. Everybody knows them, and they are given in every book of selections from English poetry. Only a few lines, and those perhaps the best known in the whole poem, will be given to provide the background against which we may picture Cowper on so many, many evenings of his quiet life.

> Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
> Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
> And, while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
> Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
> That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
> So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
>
> . . . . .
>
> O Winter! ruler of the inverted year, . . .
> I crown thee king of intimate delights,
> Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness,
> And all the comforts that the lowly roof
> Of undisturb'd Retirement, and the hours
> Of long uninterrupted evening, know.

The Task was begun in the summer of 1783, and finished before the end of 1784. In 1785 it was published, and the recluse of Olney suddenly found himself famous. The friends he had left in the busy world when, so many years ago, he had hidden himself in his country retirement, read the poem with surprise and delight. From them, and from new admirers, complimentary letters came to the house at Olney. Cowper, had he wished, might have become a lion of society, but he preferred to remain in the seclusion which best suited his habits and temperament. He was delighted with the fame *The Task* had brought, but he was determined not to depart from the principles he had there laid down. "The whole," he had said, "has one tendency, to discountenance the modern enthusiasm after a London life, and to recommend rural ease and leisure as friendly to the cause of piety and virtue." And in the enjoyment of "rural ease and leisure" Cowper resolved to remain.

One of the old friends who had been reintroduced to Cowper through *The Task* was his cousin, Lady Hesketh. Through her influence Mrs. Unwin and Cowper removed in 1786 from the old house at Olney to the lodge in the neigh-

bouring park at Weston, which stood in a higher and in all respects a more healthful situation. Here life became brighter and more social, and the two friends who had met adversity together, now, for a short space, enjoyed a common prosperity. At Weston Cowper wrote many of the short poems by which he is best remembered, including *The Loss of the Royal George*, and *Alexander Selkirk*. He produced no more long poems, but he took up instead a translation of Homer, which kept him happily occupied up to 1791.

The years which followed 1791 were full of gloom. Mrs. Unwin's health declined, and Cowper was called upon to repay to her the care which, in the days of his own distress she had lavished on him. That he did so to the full extent of his power, with grateful heart and an ungrudging devotion, his poem *To Mary* bears witness. But the task was beyond his strength, his fits of depression increased, and once more melancholia attacked him. This time he did not become actually insane, but the old religious terrors and dread of damnation returned, and he sank into a miserable apathy from which it was impossible to rouse him. Mrs. Unwin died in 1796, and the kind friends who had gathered round Cowper did their best to make his remaining years happy. But the religious gloom never really lifted. His last poem, written in 1799, was *The Castaway*, in which he compares himself to a swimmer, swept away from friends and from hope of help by rough and angry waves. The end came peacefully at last, and on the morning of the 25th of April 1800, the gentle, tormented spirit passed quietly away.

And now what time ye all may read through dimming tears his story,
How discord on the music fell and darkness on the glory.
And how when, one by one, sweet sounds and wandering lights departed,
He wore no less a loving face because so broken-hearted,—

He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,
And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker adoration;
Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken,
Named softly as the household name of one whom God hath taken.

MRS. BROWNING.

CHAPTER XL

THE POEMS OF ROBERT BURNS

AT the beginning of the year 1759 there stood on the road that leads from the town of Ayr to the banks of the 'bonnie Doon' a small clay-built cottage. William Burness, a poor Scotch gardener had built it with his own hands as a home for himself and his wife; and on January 25, 1759, in the midst of a wild and stormy winter, was born there their eldest son Robert. "No wonder," he used to say in after life, "that one ushered into the world amid such a tempest should be the victim of stormy passions." In the "auld clay biggin" Robert grew up from infancy to childhood. The home was a poor one, but he, with the brothers and sisters who came later to join him in the little cottage, were not therefore to be pitied. They grew up hearty and strong on "halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food": they had a careful, tender mother, and a father whom they remembered and spoke of with pride all their lives long. He was one of those peasant-saints who are Scotland's glory, and the fervour of his religious feeling ennobled every act of his hard and toilsome life. He was sober, frugal and industrious, with keen intellectual powers and a reverence for learning which made him eager to give his sons every educational advantage that he could possibly obtain for them.

When Robert was nearly seven years old the family removed to a small farm at Mount Oliphant, about two miles from the Brig o' Doon. William Burness hoped to improve his poor fortunes by turning from gardening to farming. But the venture was an unlucky one. The most severe toil and rigid economy were necessary to wring a living from the unproduc-

tive soil. Robert and his brother Gilbert were forced to give their help, and while they were yet growing boys, they worked like men. The good father grew old and careworn in the struggle, but he still gave anxious thought to the education of his boys. He and four of his neighbours engaged a young schoolmaster, named Murdoch, who boarded with each family in turn, and received a small salary for teaching their children. When the schoolmaster left, William Burness taught his children himself, giving to them the evening hours he sorely needed for rest. In this way the boys received a sound and thorough Scotch education. "Nothing," says Gilbert Burns, in an account which he wrote later of the early life of his celebrated brother, "could be more retired than our general manner of living; we rarely saw anybody but the members of our own family. . . . My father was for some time almost the only companion we had. He conversed familiarly on all subjects with us, as if we had been men; and was at great pains, as we accompanied him in the labours of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge, or confirm us in virtuous habits. He borrowed Salmon's *Geographical Grammar* for us, and endeavoured to make us acquainted with the situation and history of the different countries in the world; while, from a book society in Ayr, he procured for us the reading of Derham's *Physico- and Astro-Theology*, and Ray's *Wisdom of God in the Creation*, to give us some idea of astronomy and natural history. Robert read all these books with an avidity and industry scarcely to be equalled. My father had been a subscriber to Stackhouse's *History of the Bible*. From this Robert collected a competent knowledge of ancient history; for no book was so voluminous as to slacken his industry, or so antiquated as to damp his researches." Other books which Robert himself speaks of having read at this time are the *Life of Hannibal*, *The History of Sir William Wallace*, some odd numbers of the *Spectator*, some of Shakespeare's plays, Pope's works, including his translation of Homer, Locke on the *Human Understanding*, Richardson's *Pamela* and Allan Ramsay's *Poems*. These are

not the books we should expect to find in the house of a poor farmer, but the Burness family were, one and all, eager and intelligent readers. A visitor coming into the farmhouse of Mount Oliphant one day at dinner-time, found the whole family seated with a spoon in one hand and a book in the other. Many a wealthy home in Edinburgh had less of the true spirit of culture than was to be found in the poor farm-house of William Burness; and side by side with this dwelt the spirit of loving-kindness, of tender family affection, of reverence for all things holy and all things pure.

In such an atmosphere Robert Burns grew up; and though he had many hardships to bear, though hard and constant toil and meagre food told on his health, though he had but a scanty wage and few pleasures, his boyhood and youth cannot have been so altogether unhappy as some of his biographers have represented it. Probably he thought himself unhappier than he really was, for his nature was hot and passionate, and he longed for the prizes and the pleasures of the great world which lay beyond the bare moors that surrounded his home. Very early he began to find some relief for his feelings in poetry. When he was about sixteen he came across a book called *A Select Collection of English Songs*, which he seized upon with eagerness. Already he knew most of the songs of Allan Ramsay by heart, and this new collection was like a great store of gold added to his treasure. "I pored over them," he says, "driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true tender or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is."

In 1777 the Burness family moved to a better farm on the north bank of the River Ayr, and things became a little more prosperous. It was at this farm of Lochlea that Robert's song-writing, at which he had before made some attempts, began to show the fine qualities which distinguish his greatest efforts. Most of his songs were love-songs, for Robert, through-

Robert Burns
A. Nasmyth
Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

out his life, was most susceptible to the inspiration given by love. "My heart," he says, "was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or another." His bright glowing eyes, gallant manner, and ready tongue, made him a favourite with all the lasses round about his home, and several of these he celebrated in his early verses.

My Nanie's charming, sweet, an' young;
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nanie, O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true
As spotless as she's bonie, O:
The op'ning gowan, wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nanie, O.

It was not only among the lasses, however, that Robert was popular. His brother Gilbert used to "recall with delight the days when they had to go with one or two companions to cut peats for the winter fuel, because Robert was sure to enliven their toil with a rattling fire of witty remarks on men and things, mingled with the expressions of a genial glowing heart, and the whole perfectly free from the taint which he afterwards acquired from his contact with the world. Not even in those volumes which afterwards charmed his country from end to end, did Gilbert see his brother in so interesting a light as in these conversations in the bog, with only two or three noteless peasants for an audience."

The brilliant gifts that made Robert the centre of interest wherever he went led him at last into temptation which he was unable to resist. In the summer of 1781 he and his brother Gilbert went to the town of Irvine, to learn flax-dressing. Here Robert fell in with some wild companions, who exercised a strong influence upon him. The teaching of his home was, for a time, forgotten. He shared the irregular and dissipated life of his new acquaintances, and learnt to look upon the religion of his father as antiquated and illiberal, and to pride himself upon his emancipation from beliefs which now seemed to him cramping prejudices. The effect of this stay at Irvine was to change the character of his life. Hence-

forward the deterioration was slow, but steady, though it was interrupted by fits of deep and sincere penitence and earnest resolutions of amendment.

In 1784 William Burness died, troubled, as we read, upon his death-bed with fears for the future of his eldest son, whose brilliant genius and weak moral nature he had early recognized. Robert felt his father's loss acutely, and made many resolutions to be steady and industrious, the mainstay of his widowed mother and his sisters. But the ill-success of a farming experiment which he made in partnership with his brother Gilbert disheartened him, and in the recklessness of his disappointment he returned to his old evil habits. The poems written during this period show clearly how far he had drifted from the godly teaching and the noble ideals of his dead father. Personal ill-feeling against his own parish minister led him to make a fierce attack upon the Church as a whole, and in a series of poems—*The Twa Herds*, *Holy Willie's Prayer*, *The Ordination*, and the *Holy Fair*—he used all his powers of wit and sarcasm against the clergy of that party known in Scotland as the Auld Lights. It has been said that Burns attacked not the Church, but its abuses, and this, to a certain extent, is true. But he did his work so recklessly, was so careless in his handling of holy things, and showed altogether such a want of reverence and even of decency, that the poems served to increase his already bad reputation even while they raised his poetic fame.

Yet almost at the time that he was writing them he was meditating that beautiful tribute to his father's religion which he enshrined in his *Cottar's Saturday Night*, and was experiencing those patriotic heart-stirrings which made him long to do something for the country of which he was so proud. In him pure and lofty impulses, though they could not overcome the temptations that debased him, could not be themselves overcome. "Obscure I am, obscure I must be," he wrote in his commonplace book, August 1784, "though no young poet nor young soldier's heart ever beat more fondly for fame than mine," and, at a later date in his career, he

expressed the feelings that at this time possessed him still more finely in verse :

> E'en then a wish, I mind its power,
> A wish that to my latest hour
> Shall strongly heave my breast,
> That I for poor Auld Scotland's sake
> Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,
> Or sing a song at least.

The years 1784–86, which were marked by the rapid deterioration of the poet's moral character, were marked also by the production of some of his finest verse. The two well-known lyrics *To a Mouse* and *To a Daisy*, were suggested by the incidents of his daily work. Two love affairs, both unfortunate, inspired respectively the lovely songs, *O' a' the airts the wind can blaw*, and *Highland Mary*. These, and many others, were written in the garret bedroom which Robert shared with his brother Gilbert. "The farmhouse of Mossgiel," says his biographer, Chambers, "which still exists almost unchanged since the days of the poet, is very small, consisting of only two rooms, a but and a ben, as they are called in Scotland. Over these, reached by a trap stair, is a small garret, in which Robert and his brother used to sleep. Thither, when he had returned from his day's work, the poet used to retire, and seat himself at a small deal table, lighted by a narrow skylight in the roof, to transcribe the verses which he had composed in the fields. His favourite time for composition was at the plough. Long years afterward his sister, Mrs. Begg, used to tell how when her brother had gone forth again to field-work, she would steal up to the garret and search the drawer of the deal table for the verses which Robert had newly transcribed."

By 1786 Burns had given up all hope of making his farming a success. Life at Mossgiel had become intolerable to him. His conduct had been openly censured by the minister; his neighbours regarded him as a reprobate of the worst kind; "Highland Mary," whom he seems to have truly loved, was dead; to his other love, Jean Armour, he had been cruel and faithless. "I have been," Burns wrote to one of his friends,

"for some time pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering stabs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society or the vagaries of the Muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner."

The only means of escape seemed to lie in leaving Scotland for a distant country. After some time spent in fruitless efforts to arrange this, Burns at last obtained a post as overseer on a negro plantation in Jamaica. In order to raise money for the expenses of the voyage, he resolved to publish his poems by subscription. In July 1786 the book was issued by a printer of Kilmarnock, and it at once made Burns famous. "Old and young, high and low, grave and gay, learned or ignorant, were alike delighted, agitated, transported. . Ploughboys and maidservants would have gladly bestowed the wages they earned most hardly and which they wanted to purchase necessary clothing, if they might procure the works of Burns." The fame of the book reached Edinburgh, at this time a great centre of culture, and many of the prominent men gathered there felt a strong desire to see the Ayrshire ploughman who had written so wonderfully. One of these, Dugald Stewart, Professor of Moral Philosophy, whose classes at Edinburgh University young Walter Scott was at that time attending, had already met Burns, in Ayrshire, and had been delighted with his manly, modest bearing and good sense no less than with his poetry. The blind poet, Dr. Blacklock, who also belonged to the innermost circle of Edinburgh's learned men was enthusiastic in his praise of the Kilmarnock volume. A letter written by him came into Burns's hands, and this it was, as he tells us, that overthrew all his schemes by opening up new prospects to his poetic ambition.

The voyage to Jamaica was given up, and Burns resolved to try his fortune in Edinburgh. His two days' journey thither was like a triumphal progress; at each inn on the road admirers gathered and gave him the heartiest reception. Arrived in Edinburgh he settled at the house of a humble

friend from Ayrshire, but soon the great men of the city found him out. Burns became the lion of Edinburgh society. Every house opened to him. The Earl of Glencairn met him in a spirit of kindliest friendship; the Duchess of Gordon and other ladies of the highest rank and fashion declared that his conversation "took them off their feet." The great lights of the legal profession, which formed so important a part of Edinburgh society, treated him with the greatest respect and consideration. Through all this adulation Burns's native good sense bore him with safety and dignity. He never pretended to be other than he was. He wore the dress suited to his class, a suit of blue and buff, with buckskins and topped boots, in which he looked like a farmer in his Sunday best. He never condescended to flatter the great lords and ladies who gathered round him, and he made it quite clear by his behaviour that he accepted their hospitality as offered not to an inferior, but to an equal.

The most interesting incident connected with this Edinburgh visit was the meeting between Burns and Walter Scott, who was then a lad of fifteen. They met at the house of Professor Fergusson, and Scott has recorded his impression of the elder poet. "His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. . . . I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school—the '*douce gudeman*,' who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, and glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men in my time."

A new edition of the poems was published in April 1787. The list of subscribers included many of the most famous names in Scotland. From the Kilmarnock edition he had received £20; the proceeds of the Edinburgh volume exceeded

£500. To Burns this was a fortune, and, wisely applied, might have laid the foundation of a lasting prosperity. Some of it he spent on tours in the Highlands which occupied the rest of the year 1787. He gave £180 to his brother Gilbert, and with what was left he bought and stocked the farm of Ellisland, in Nithsdale, near Dumfries. In April 1788 he was reconciled to, and married Jean Armour, and the two began their life at Ellisland.

But the new farming venture was no more successful than the old had been. Habits of dissipation had taken a strong hold on Burns, and he was incapable of the steady regular application which his position required. His farm-hands followed their master's example and spent much of their time in idleness and merry-making. The family depended mainly on Burns's salary as an excise officer, an appointment given to him through the influence of some of his Edinburgh friends. Its duties took him constantly away from his home, and increased his unsettled habits. His fame attracted many visitors to the neighbourhood of Ellisland, and messengers were often sent to the farm asking him to dine with his admirers at some neighbouring tavern. Then followed a night of merry-making and days of repentant misery. Poor meek Jean Armour and her children had but a sorry time; life at Ellisland had now few of the 'golden days' to which the poet had looked forward when, in the summer of 1788, he had journeyed through the beautiful and romantic scenery of Nithsdale to his new farm like "a May-frog, leaping across the newly harrowed ridge."

The darkening, anxious years, however, saw a revival of Burns's poetic energy. Throughout the brilliant Edinburgh period he had written nothing, and even the lovely scenery of the Highlands had afforded no inspiration. But now songs came readily and quickly. Some were drinking songs like the inimitable:

> O, Willie brewed a peck o' maut,
> And Rob and Allan cam to see;
> Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang night
> Ye wad na found in Christendie.

which commemorated a merry meeting between Burns and his friends Allan Masterton and William Nicol. Some are sad and tender, like the lovely lyrics in memory of the never-forgotten "Highland Mary." On the anniversary of her death Burns wrote:

> Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
> That lov'st to greet the early morn,
> Again thou usherest in the day
> My Mary from my soul was torn.
> O Mary! dear departed shade!
> Where is thy place of blissful rest?
> Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
> Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

Other Ellisland songs are *John Anderson my Jo, John, Auld Lang Syne, The Silver Tassie* and *The Banks o' Doon.* Burns meditated writing a great dramatic work, but the sustained effort necessary for this was beyond his powers. His longest poem, and one of his finest was the *Tale of Tam o' Shanter*, composed, as he tells us, in a state of joyful excitement one day in the autumn of 1790.

By 1791 Burns had resolved to leave Ellisland, and in August the sale of the farm took place and the family moved to Dumfries. The history of the poet's life in his town home is a history of continued deterioration, though his poetic genius shone almost as brightly as ever. The years between 1791 and 1796 saw the production of *Ae fond kiss, O my luve's like a red, red rose, O wert thou in the cauld blast, She is a winsome wee thing, Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,* and the fine *A Man's a Man for a' That.*

> Is there, for honest poverty,
> That hangs his head, and a' that?
> The coward-slave, we pass him by,
> We dare be poor for a' that!
> For a' that, and a' that,
> Our toils obscure, and a' that;
> The rank is but the guinea stamp;
> The man's the gowd for a' that.

Toward the end of 1795 the poet's health began to fail. Hard drinking and constant excitement brought their natural results, and when in January 1796, after a long carouse he fell

asleep in the open air on a bitter winter's night, his enfeebled frame was unable to recover from the effects of the exposure. Rheumatic fever set in, and after an illness of some months Robert Burns died on July 21, 1796. In his own *Bard's Epitaph*, written ten years before, he had provided the words in which his career can best be summed up and its moral read :

> The poor inhabitant below
> Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
> And keenly felt the friendly glow,
> And softer flame ;
> But thoughtless follies laid him low,
> And stained his name.
>
> Reader, attend ! Whether thy soul
> Soars fancy's flight beyond the pole,
> Or darkening grubs this earthly hole,
> In low pursuit ;
> Know, prudent, cautious self-control
> Is wisdom's root

Early Nineteenth Century

THE great influence affecting literature during this period was the French Revolution. The revolt from the school of Pope reached its highest point and the modern school of poetry was established. Poetry of the very highest order was produced. The novel attained a fuller development in the hands of Jane Austen and Walter Scott, while Lamb, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt and other contributors to the periodicals of the day gave vogue to the modern ' essay.'

CHAPTER XLI

THE LYRICAL BALLADS

WE have watched the new spirit in English poetry gathering strength through the works of Thomson, Collins, Gray, Chatterton, Blake, Cowper and Burns. We come now to the two poets in whom it found its fullest and most perfect development—William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. These two, who were to join in producing a book that marks a new era in the history of English poetry, were born and bred at opposite ends of England —Wordsworth in the northern Lake District, and Coleridge in the beautiful southern county that has given us so many famous Englishmen—the county of Devon. Wordsworth, the elder by two years, came of a family long settled in Westmorland, and was himself, throughout his life, a dalesman in sympathy and habits. He had the same home-loving nature, shrewd simplicity and unbending pride that characterized his poorer neighbours, and he never acquired that superficial polish which sometimes obscures native qualities. When he was in his fourteenth year, his father died, and William was left to the care of his two uncles. All his schooldays were spent in Westmorland, and in his autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, he tells what the beauty of the surrounding country did for him in his boyish years :

> What spring and autumn, what the winter snows,
> And what the summer shade, what day and night,
> Evening and morning, sleep and waking, thought
> From sources inexhaustible, poured forth
> To feed the spirit of religious love
> In which I walked with Nature.
>
> . . . . . .

Ye mountains, and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds
That dwell among the hills where I was born,
If in my youth I have been pure in heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
With God and Nature communing, removed
From little enmities and low desires ——
The gift is yours.
. . . 'Tis yours,
Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
My lofty speculations; and in thee,
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
A never-failing principle of joy
And purest passion.

Cowper and Burns loved Nature, but the love could not sustain and comfort Cowper, or ennoble the life of Burns. For Wordsworth it could, and did, do both these things. For him Nature had not only a fair and beautiful body, but a great informing soul. Other poets, it is true, from the time of Milton, had recognized that behind the beauty of the world was the spirit of God, working, creating, and sustaining. But to none had this truth come home with the force and intimacy that it came to Wordsworth. No poet before him had seen in Nature the special medium through which God communicates with His people—teaches them, guides them, reproves and encourages them. Wordsworth loved a flower, not primarily because it was beautiful in colour and in form, or because it was wonderfully made, but because he saw in it a spark of the Divine spirit that claimed his reverence; the glory of the messenger was lost in the greater glory of the message. It is this feeling which gives to Wordsworth's poetry its characteristic value, and it is this which causes him to deal in so many of his poems with subjects that may seem common and even mean. For him nothing was mean, for in all was the spirit of God.

Meanwhile, Coleridge, too, was being shaped for his life's work. He was the son of the vicar of Ottery St. Mary, and the youngest of a family of thirteen. From his earliest years he was a marvellously precocious child. "I never played," he says, "except by myself, and then only acting over what I

S. T. Coleridge
Washington Allston, A.R.A.
Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

398

had been reading or fancying, or half one and half the other, cutting down weeds and nettles with a stick, as one of the seven champions of Christendom. Alas! I had all the simplicity, all the docility of the little child, but none of the child's habits. I never thought as a child—never had the language of a child." Before he was ten years old he wrote verses which were surprisingly good for a child of his age. At ten he left the quiet Devonshire village, and came up to London to Christ's Hospital. Here, as part of his school course, he studied the works of the great English poets closely and minutely, under the guidance of "a very sensible though at the same time a very severe master." He became, as he tells us, above par in English versification, and produced two or three compositions "somewhat above mediocrity." But soon he was drawn from the study of poetry by another pursuit that took entire possession of him. "At a very premature age, even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics, and in theological controversy. Nothing else pleased me. History, and particular facts, lost all interest in my mind. . . . Poetry itself, yea novels and romances, became insipid to me." Charles Lamb, who was Coleridge's schoolfellow at Christ's Hospital, describes some occasions upon which the tall, commanding-looking schoolboy with his long black hair and pale face, astonished all his hearers by his eloquence. "How have I seen," writes Lamb, "the casual passer through the cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the speech and the garb of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold in thy deep and sweet intonations the mysteries of Iamblichus or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts) or reciting Homer in the Greek, or Pindar, while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed with the accents of the *inspired charity-boy*."

From this preoccupation in metaphysics Coleridge was recalled by reading the sonnets of William Lisle Bowles, a minor poet of the day. These sonnets are fresh and natural, but show no great poetic power, and it is difficult to see why

they should have exerted so powerful an influence over such a nature as Coleridge's. He was, he tells us, "enthusiastically delighted and inspired" by these poems, and through their influence he resumed the practice of poetical composition, which he had for several years neglected

When Coleridge went up to Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1791, Wordsworth was just leaving St. John's College, of the same University The three years he had spent there had given him a fresh store of beautiful mental images, but in all other respects he had changed little. His appearance was still heavy and somewhat rustic, his manner reserved and austere. The intense inner life of communion with Nature, of which in his boyhood he had become so keenly conscious, had strengthened with the years, and his inclination toward a life of studious retirement had strengthened too. It was necessary, however, that he should do something to earn his own living, but over the choice of a profession he lingered and hesitated. For a few months he lived in London, wandering about its streets and meditating on his career; toward the end of the year he went to France, meaning to spend the winter in learning the French language. Here he found himself in the midst of the great Revolution movement of which, at home, he had calmly and temperately approved. But his lukewarmness changed to a burning enthusiasm when he met and talked with some of those ardent spirits to whom the Revolution seemed the hope of the world. He dreamed, indeed, of taking an active part as a leader in the great movement; but his friends at home grew alarmed, his allowance was stopped, and very unwillingly he returned to England at the end of 1792.

But the ideals of the Revolution still possessed him, and he watched with passionate interest the course which affairs were taking in France. The excesses of its later stages, and more especially the murder of the king shook his belief in the moral grandeur and regenerating power of the movement. Lower and lower sank his hopes through the terrible years that followed his return to England, until at last came the agonizing

realization that it was no reign of Universal Brotherhood that was dawning on the world but a reign of tyranny and selfish lust of power. For a time he lost heart and hope. He saw man as a being unable to tell good from evil, loyal to no law that might deliver him from his lower self, but ever driven unresisting "as selfish passion urged" until he became "the dupe of folly, or the slave of crime." It was only very slowly that this mood of despair passed from him. When his soul had reached its 'last and lowest ebb,'

> Then it was—
> Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good!—
> That the beloved Sister in whose sight
> Those days were passed, . . .
> Maintained for me a saving intercourse
> With my true self; . . .
> She whispered still that brightness would return,
> She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
> A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
> And that alone, my office upon earth;
> . . . Nature's self
> By all varieties of human love
> Assisted, led me back through opening day
> To those sweet counsels between head and heart
> Whence grew that genuine knowledge, fraught with peace,
> Which, through the later sinkings of this cause,
> Hath still upheld me, and upholds me now.

This was the greatest spiritual crisis through which Wordsworth ever passed. His sister Dorothy, who had helped him in his need, was from this time forward the poet's constant companion. She was, in feeling, as true a poet as he himself was. Her nature was singularly ardent and affectionate and her devotion to her brother was complete. She guarded him, as far as was in her power, from worldly cares and troubles, and made the life of studious leisure for which he longed, possible for him. Wordsworth loved his sister tenderly, and over and over again in his poems acknowledged the deep debt he owed her.

The plan of living together in some simple country cottage had been in the minds of the two for several years before a fortunate circumstance made it possible. A friend and admirer of Wordsworth's, Mr. Raisley Calvert, left him in

1794 a legacy of £900. This he laid out in an annuity, upon which the frugal management of Dorothy Wordsworth made it possible for the two to live. They settled down in a cottage at Racedown, in Dorsetshire, and Wordsworth began in earnest his poetic career. It was at Racedown that the memorable friendship with Coleridge began.

The years which had been so bare of actual events and so full of spiritual experiences for Wordsworth had brought great changes to Coleridge. He had taken up his university life with some enthusiasm, though his method of study was 'desultory and capricious.' "His room was a constant rendezvous for conversation-loving friends" who felt astonishment similar to that of his Christ's Hospital associates at his wonderful powers of declamation. In 1793 Coleridge, through troubles connected either with love or with money, suddenly disappeared from the University and enlisted as a private in the Light Dragoons under the name of Silas Titus Comberbach (S.T.C.). After four months, his scholarship having been discovered by one of the officers, he was bought out by his friends, and was allowed to return to Cambridge. In 1794, during a visit to Oxford, he met Robert Southey, the poet. Coleridge was at this time possessed, as Wordsworth had been, by the ideals of the French Revolution. His republican passion was far more violent than that of the steadier, sounder-natured Wordsworth, and led him into all kinds of wild and impracticable projects. He was in a state of mind that made him quite ready to take up with enthusiasm the ideas that were at that time occupying the minds of Southey and his friend Robert Lovell. The two had married sisters, Mary and Edith Fricker, and designed, with them, to form a community on the banks of the Susquehanna, which community should be a perfect society of kindred souls, who should have all things in common. The name they gave to the doctrine on which this scheme was based was Pantisocrasy. Coleridge at once became an ardent Pantisocrat. He engaged himself to the third sister of the Fricker family, Sarah, induced, as some say, by genuine passion, or as is held by others, by a misguided

impulse. The great scheme was never realized, owing chiefly to lack of funds, but it had a considerable influence on Coleridge's development. He began at this time his part of the drama *The Fall of Robespierre*, to which Southey and Lovell also contributed, and he delivered a series of lectures on the French Revolution at Bristol. His enthusiasm for the Revolution, however, soon began to cool; as it had been more violent than that of Wordsworth, so its effects were less lasting. A new scheme now occupied him. In October 1795 he married Miss Sarah Fricker, and the two settled down in a cottage at Clevedon, amid the most beautiful scenery, and within sound of the sea. There was about an acre and a half of ground attached to the cottage, and this Coleridge designed to cultivate, and to support himself and his wife on the produce. They were to live in the simplest fashion, with no servant and no society. Three happy months seem to have followed, and the poem *The Æolian Harp*, which Coleridge wrote at this time, breathes the very spirit of joy:

> Methinks, it should have been impossible
> Not to love all things in a world so filled;
> Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air
> Is Music slumbering on her instrument.

But, as might have been expected, money soon began to fail, and Coleridge found himself obliged to turn once more to literary work for a means of living. He wrote many poems, filled, all of them, with the ardour and extravagance of his hot youth, and these, with his earlier verses, were collected and published in 1797. In 1796 he essayed journalism, and planned the publication of a paper for the propagation of the ideas that possessed him. The paper was to be called *The Watchman*, and was to advocate Universal Liberty, Unitarianism, and a vast number of other doctrines connected with religion, politics and education. Coleridge's account, in his *Biographia Literaria* of the tour which he made in the north of England for the purpose of gaining subscribers to his paper is a most delightful piece of finely humorous writing. The project, it is scarcely necessary to say, failed completely

Early in 1797 Coleridge removed to a cottage at Nether Stowey in Somersetshire, which a friend and admirer of his genius, Mr. Thomas Poole, had placed at his disposal. Here he was visited by Charles and Mary Lamb, and from here he started on his own memorable visit to the Wordsworths, walking from Nether Stowey by Bridgewater to Racedown. He had for some years been an enthusiastic admirer of Wordsworth's poems, and personal acquaintance ripened this admiration into affection. Coleridge soon formed a close friendship with Wordsworth and with his 'exquisite sister.' Dorothy Wordsworth's impressions of this new friend must be given in her own words: "He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. Then he is so benevolent, so good-tempered and cheerful, and, like William, interests himself so much about every little trifle. At first I thought him very plain, that is for about three minutes; he is pale, thin, has a wide mouth, thick lips, and not very good teeth, longish, loose-growing, half-curling rough black hair. But if you hear him speak for five minutes you think no more of them. His eye is large and full, and not very dark but grey, such an eye as would receive from an heavy soul the dullest expression; but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind: he has more of the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows and an overhanging forehead."

The Wordsworths soon learnt to set so high a value on the company of their new friend, that they gave up their house at Racedown, and removed to Alfoxden, near Nether Stowey. Here, for twelve months the two poets were in constant association. They wandered together over the beautiful Quantock Hills, which Dorothy Wordsworth, who often made one of the party, has so finely described in her *Journal*. "Our conversations," Coleridge tells us, "turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination." "In this idea," he goes on, "originated the plan of the Lyrical Ballads; in which it

was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic. . . . Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us." Wordsworth takes up the tale, and tells us how the details of the plan were originated and worked out. "In the autumn of 1797, Mr. Coleridge, my sister and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon, with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem to be sent to *The New Monthly Magazine*. In the course of this walk was planned the poem of the *Ancient Mariner*, founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention; but certain parts I suggested; for example, some crime was to be committed which was to bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterward delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's *Voyages*, a day or two before, that, while doubling Cape Horn they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. 'Suppose,' said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. We began the composition together, on that to me memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular:

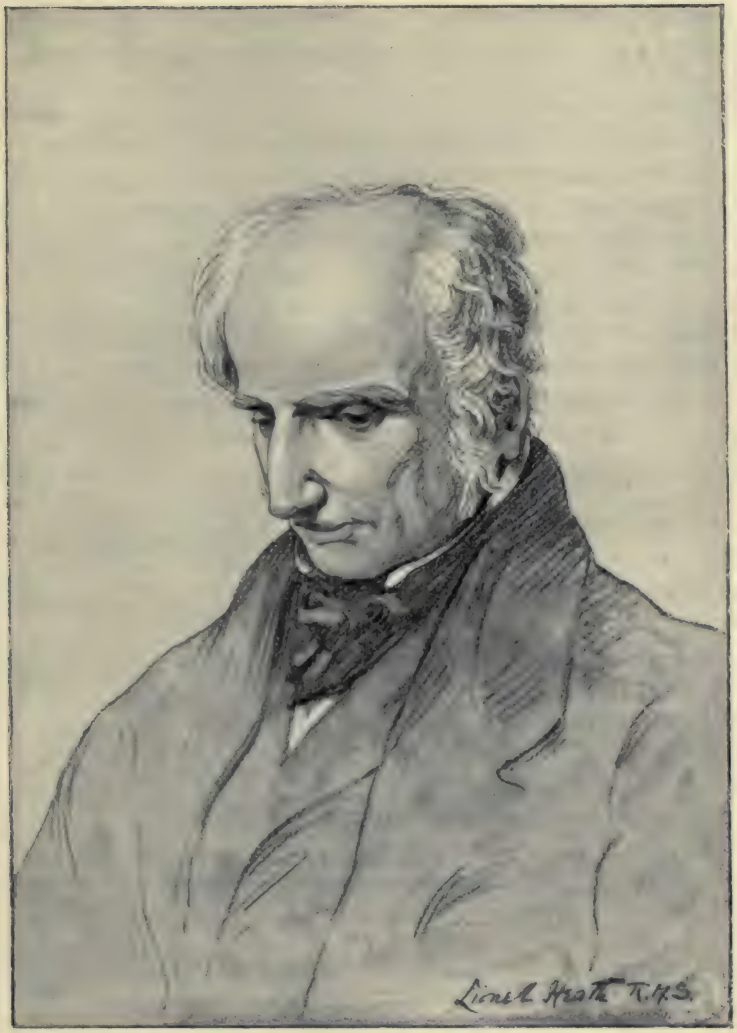
> And listened like a three years' child;
> The Mariner had his will.

As we endeavoured to proceed conjointly our respective manners proved so widely different, that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. *The Ancient Mariner* grew and grew, till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds ; and we began to think of a volume, which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems, chiefly on supernatural subjects, taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through an imaginative medium."

It would appear from this that the division of the work, as given by Coleridge, was a development of the original plan ; but when the different portions were assigned, each poet proceeded rapidly. Coleridge finished *The Ancient Mariner*, that wonderful poem which is unlike anything else in the English language, including all the other works of Coleridge himself. It shows all his wonderful imaginative power, together with a simplicity and restraint which is not usual in his works, and for which, perhaps, he has to thank the influence of Wordsworth.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner was Coleridge's great contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads*. "I was preparing," he tells us, among other poems, *The Dark Ladie* and the *Christabel*, in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter." The *Lyrical Ballads*, in its first edition, contained nineteen poems by Wordsworth, and only four by Coleridge, but, the one contribution of the *Ancient Mariner* gave the less prolific writer a fair claim to the title of partner in the work.

Of the poems contributed by Wordsworth to the *Lyrical Ballads* he tells us many interesting particulars in the notes prefaced to later editions of his works. They seem to have been composed in Wordsworth's happiest mood, not laboriously,



William Wordsworth

as tasks, but in a spirit of pure enjoyment. "This long poem," Wordsworth writes of *The Idiot Boy*, "was composed in the groves of Alfoxden, almost extempore; not a word, I believe, being corrected, though one stanza was omitted. I mention this in gratitude to those happy moments, for, in truth, I never wrote anything with so much glee." Often a particular poem, before it was put aside as finished, was read aloud to Dorothy Wordsworth and Coleridge, for their criticism. Of *We Are Seven* Wordsworth tells us, "When it was all but finished, I came in and recited it to Mr. Coleridge and my sister, and said, 'A preparatory stanza must be added, and I should sit down to our little tea-meal with greater pleasure if my task were finished.' I mentioned in substance what I wished to be expressed, and Coleridge immediately threw off the stanza thus:

A little child, dear brother Jem,—

I objected to the rhyme 'dear brother Jem' as being ludicrous, but we all enjoyed the joke of hitching in our friend James T——'s name, who was familiarly called Jem. . . The said Jem got a sight of the *Lyrical Ballads* as it was going through the press at Bristol, during which time I was residing in that city. One evening he came to me with a grave face, and said, 'Wordsworth, I have seen the volume that Coleridge and you are about to publish. There is one poem in it which I earnestly entreat you will cancel, for, if published, it will make you everlastingly ridiculous.' I answered that I felt much obliged by the interest he took in my good name as a writer, and begged to know what was the unfortunate piece he alluded to. He said, 'It is called, *We are Seven*.' 'Nay,' said I, 'that shall take its chance, however,' and he left me in despair."

The criticism of this friend anticipated the criticism which *We are Seven*, with several other of Wordsworth's poems was to receive when the *Lyrical Ballads* were published in the autumn of 1798. The style and language of these poems were entirely new to a public accustomed to the polished, artificial

verse of Pope and his followers. "Innocent and pretty infantile prattle," one reviewer called *We are Seven*, and *The Thorn*, *Goody Blake*, and *The Idiot Boy*, received still harsher condemnation. Wordsworth, however, maintained and defended his position. In a second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800, he inserted a Preface, in which he set out at length the reasons which had guided him in his choice of subjects and of language. "Humble and rustic life was generally chosen," he says, "because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language." "My purpose was to imitate and as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men." "There will be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction, as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is usually taken to produce it." "It may be safely affirmed that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition." These quotations from Wordsworth's lengthy argument set forward the principles to which he consistently held during the whole of his poetical career. Neither ridicule nor monetary loss—both of which he suffered in no common degree—could induce him to recant. The theory of poetic writing to which he thus stubbornly held was, doubtless, in many respects faulty; and to it are due those flat stretches of bald, prosaic verse which the most devoted Wordsworthian finds himself unable to defend. But the very exaggeration of his views helped him to do his part in bringing about the revolution in poetic taste which marked the early part of the nineteenth century.

But when we have acknowledged these lapses, and ruled out much of Wordsworth's work as unworthy of a great poet, there still remains a very large number of poems which reach the highest poetic standard both with regard to loftiness of sentiment and beauty of language. Such is the beautiful *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*, published in the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, which contains the lines

so often quoted as expressing the main tenets of that 'religion of Nature' of which Wordsworth was the apostle.

> Nature never did betray
> The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege
> Through all the years of this our life, to lead
> From joy to joy: for she can so inform
> The mind that is within us, so impress
> With quietness and beauty, and so feed
> With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
> Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
> Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
> The dreary intercourse of daily life,
> Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
> Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
> Is full of blessings.

With the *Lines on Tintern Abbey* the book of Lyrical Ballads ends, and as soon as it was published Wordsworth and his sister, with Coleridge, started for Hamburg. At Hamburg Coleridge left the other two and proceeded to the University of Göttingen. Here he stayed for five months. There was a colony of English students at Göttingen, and Coleridge seems soon to have made himself a noted figure among them by his enthusiasm for literature, his inexhaustible flow of eloquence, his metaphysical theories and his poems. "It is very delightful," writes one of his fellow-students, "to hear him sometimes discourse on religious topics for an hour together." *Christabel*, that weird and beautiful poem, which he began in 1798, and never finished, was recited to his attentive audience, and perhaps received some additions during his stay in Germany. He returned to England in July 1799, having acquired a thorough knowledge of the German language, and increased his taste for metaphysical speculation.

The Wordsworths, meanwhile, had settled for the winter at Goslar, where they lived a retired life, and made very little progress in learning the German language, for which purpose this journey had been made. They suffered severely from the extreme cold, but the poems which Wordsworth wrote during this period are among his very best. They include *Lucy Gray*, *Ruth*, *Nutting*, *The Poet's Epitaph* and *Lucy*. He also planned

and began the long autobiographical poem of which only two parts, *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*, out of the projected three were ever finished.

When they returned to England early in 1799, Wordsworth and his sister settled down in their native and beloved Lake Country. A second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* was published in 1800, in which was included the shorter poems written by Wordsworth during his stay in Germany. The first edition, so the publisher is reported to have told Coleridge, "had been sold to seafaring men, who, having heard of the *Ancient Mariner*, took the volume for a naval song-book." The second also, attained no great degree of general popularity. It was violently attacked by the critics who called the *Ancient Mariner* a 'cock-and-bull story,' and compared some of Wordsworth's lyrics to 'Sing a Song of Sixpence.'" Gradually, however, the poems won their way with the public, in spite of hostile reviews, and now the *Lyrical Ballads* have long been recognized as containing some of the finest work produced by the two greatest poets of the early nineteenth century, and also as marking a turning-point in the history of English poetry.

Coleridge and Wordsworth both lived for many years after the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*, but neither of them produced any work of finer quality than that contained in this early volume. The year 1798 was the golden year of Coleridge's poetical life. Soon afterward his powers began to show signs of decay. His brilliant erratic genius wasted itself in fruitless projects, his health failed, and the opium habit, which he apparently formed as early as 1802, ended by bringing about his mental ruin. He died in 1834. Wordsworth lived a quiet, frugal, happy life among his beloved lakes and mountains. In 1802 he married his cousin, Mary Hutchinson, whom he celebrated in the beautiful poem beginning, "She was a phantom of delight." His sister remained an inmate of his house until his death. Children were born, and grew up, and life went calmly with the little family in their remote and beautiful home. A few miles away, at Keswick, lived

the poet Southey with his family and the family of his brother-in-law, Coleridge; and Coleridge himself stayed, at intervals, for long periods here or with the Wordsworths. To Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey critics of the day gave the name of "Lake Poets," thus classing together three poets who in their style and their methods differed very widely.

Wordsworth wrote copiously, and his fame gradually grew. He never became a popular poet, but to the comparatively small company of those who were led to recognize the supreme merit of his work he was, what he has since become to a larger following, an inspired teacher claiming not only admiration, but reverence. He died in 1850, at the age of eighty.

CHAPTER XLII

BYRON'S CHILDE HAROLD: SHELLEY'S LYRICS

ONE afternoon in May 1798, a schoolboy walked slowly away from the famous Grammar School of Aberdeen, toward the small city house which was his home. He was not more than ten years old, but his pale, beautiful face had a look of precocious intelligence, and his splendid dark eyes glowed with strong excitement. He limped slightly as he walked though his frame was strong and sturdy; but to-day he did not, as he did on common days, glance questioningly and half-angrily into the faces of the passers-by to see if his deformity was noticed. He was possessed by one great thought. That day, he, a schoolboy, whose father had died ruined and disgraced, and whose mother lived on a poor £150 a year, had become a peer of the realm of England. His heart swelled at the thought, as it had done earlier in the day when his name had been called at school with the proud "Dominus" prefixed to it. He had burst then, into a passion of tears, and even now the tears were not very far from those shining eyes which were looking with almost wild exultation over the past and over the future. The boy thought of the fierce old grand-uncle through whose death this great honour had come to him; he recalled childish memories of wild dark tales told of his ancestors; of his father, "Mad Jack Byron," whom, by his mother's injudicious confidences, he knew to have been as profligate as he was handsome. He thought of Newstead Abbey, the grand old house which was now his own; he saw himself reigning there, the proud lord of great possessions. A movement of wild passion shook his boyish

soul, which in some dim, half-comprehended fashion, he felt established his kinship with those dead and gone men of his race. Through all his after life the memory of that moment remained. He never forgot that he was Lord Byron, member of a proud aristocracy, and he never wholly escaped from the domination of those wild passions that had ruled his ancestors.

Six years later another schoolboy-poet walked like Byron apart from his fellows and felt within him the stirring of an impulse that affected his whole life. This boy was tall and slight, with a fair complexion, large blue eyes, and soft, curling brown hair. His expression was extraordinarily sweet and gentle, and when he was strongly moved there came over his whole face such a glow of feeling as lit it into positive beauty. But for the most part he was quiet and dreamy, and often his eyes seemed to look dully out upon the world around him, because they were dimmed by the splendour of the visions that floated before his brain. He did not care much for the sports the other boys loved. He liked better to pace slowly backward and forward along the southern wall of the Brentford school at which he was a boarder, dreaming his own beautiful dreams. What were his thoughts on that May morning which marked an epoch in his life, he himself, years afterward, told to the world :

> I do remember well the hour which burst
> My spirit's sleep : a fresh May-dawn it was,
> When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,
> And wept, I knew not why ; until there rose
> From the near schoolroom, voices, that, alas !
> Were but one echo from a world of woes—
> The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.
>
> And then I clasped my hands and looked around—
> —But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
> Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground—
> So, without shame, I spoke :—" I will be wise,
> And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
> Such power, for I grow weary to behold
> The selfish and the strong still tyrannize
> Without reproach or check." I then controlled
> My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold

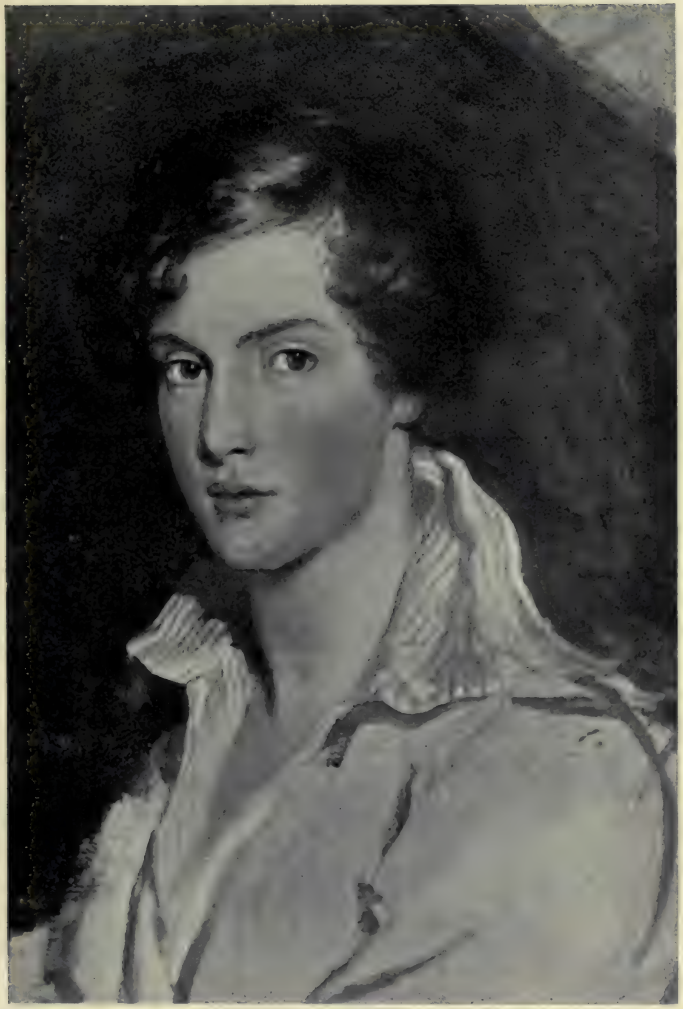
And from that hour did I with earnest thought
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
I cared to learn, but from that secret store
Wrought linked armour for my soul, before
It might walk forth to war among mankind;
Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more
Within me.

Through all his short life Percy Bysshe Shelley was faithful to this ideal of his boyhood. He and Byron were to become two of the greatest figures of the early nineteenth century, and to carry the reaction against the school of Dryden and of Pope to its farthest point. Both, in widely different ways, were to stand as leaders of revolt against the established order of things, and were to breathe into English poetry a swift, strong spirit that should bear it triumphantly into regions where it had never ventured before. But each had to pass a stormy and disastrous youth before he could accomplish his best work.

Byron, even while he was a student at Cambridge, was distinguished by the dark and cynical melancholy of his bearing and conversation. This was to some extent a pose, and proceeded from the same diseased vanity that led him to paint the irregularities of his life in colours far blacker than they deserved. The fierce natural passions that he could not control he turned into a means of self-glorification. He would be as mad and bad as any Byron of his race had ever been, and no one should pity, though they might blame him. In 1807 he published his first poems, *Hours of Idleness*. They had little poetic merit, and the reviewers poured upon them the ridicule which a poet who wrote:

Weary of love, of life, devour'd with spleen,
I rest, a perfect Timon, not nineteen,

ought to have prepared himself to meet. But Byron was furious, and published a few weeks after his coming of age in January 1809, the clever, savage attack on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, and other contemporary poets, which he called *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. The following June he left England.



Lord Byron 414

Portrait from life when about 17-18, probably by Sir Thomas Lawrence

He was absent for two years, travelling in Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey. The wildest and most romantic tales are told concerning his life at this period, and it is difficult to gain any clear idea of what he really did. There remains, however, one solid memento of his travels. On his return he took some poems entitled *Hints from Horace*, to a friend. The friend did not think very highly of them. "Have you no other result of your travels?" he asked. "A few short pieces; and a lot of Spenserian stanzas; not worth troubling you with, but you are welcome to them," Byron replied. These Spenserian stanzas were published early in the next year as the first and second cantos of *Childe Harold*. The poem relates the adventurous voyage of a 'childe' or young chieftain, whose race "had been glorious in another day." Harold is a dark and gloomy youth, "a shameless wight. Sore given to revel and ungodly glee," who having early run "through Sin's long labyrinth," had felt the "fulness of satiety," and learned to loathe his native land. He is, in fact, Byron as he loved to depict himself, and the voyage of this interesting sinner is the voyage from which Byron had just returned. The poem contains a great deal of affectation and a great deal of showy sentiment, but here and there are rich and splendid passages, which give promise of better things. Such as it was, however, it hit the taste of the public of the day. Lord Byron "woke up one morning to find himself famous." London society went mad over *Childe Harold*, and was eager to pay homage to its author. For two years he was the darling of the fashionable world. The poems which followed one another in rapid succession throughout this period roused Byron's adorers to still greater enthusiasm. In 1813 came the *Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*, in 1814 *The Corsair* and *Lara*. Each of these had its melancholy, interesting wicked hero; each had its brilliant passages shining among others that were bald and immature; in each could be felt, though uncertainly, the breath of that strong, free, spirit which was by and by to carry the author above and beyond his youthful faults. Byron wrote with ease and rapidity, and

he liked to give exaggerated accounts of his powers in this direction, and to represent himself as the fine gentleman toying with literature, the aristocrat condescending to amuse himself with composition. "*Lara*," he said, "I wrote while undressing after coming home from balls and masquerades, in the year of revelry 1814. *The Bride* was written in four, *The Corsair* in ten days. "This," he added, the true feeling of the poet overcoming the affectation of the fine gentleman, "I take to be a humiliating confession, as it proves my own want of judgment in publishing, and the public's in reading, things which cannot have stamina for permanence." He took all his honours with haughty, though courteous indifference. Yet society continued to adore him. "The women suffocated him," we are told, "with their adulation in drawing-rooms." The Byronic pose became the fashion among young men of all classes, who practised the look of dark and interesting melancholy and the scornful curl of the lip which they saw that their idol affected, and discarded their neckcloths because he appeared in a picturesque turn-down collar.

Then came the change. In 1815 Byron married Miss Milbanke, a beautiful heiress, whose somewhat cold temper and strong regard for conventional propriety were but ill-matched with the quick and passionate nature of her husband. His excesses shocked and frightened her, and soon rumours of disagreements between the two began to be heard. At the beginning of 1816 she left him, and the rumours became darker and more mysterious. There were hints of insanity, and of misconduct so terrible that it could not be spoken of. No open charge, however, was made, and it is probable that Byron's sins were nothing worse than reckless and dissipated acts which his admirers had heretofore condoned and even lauded. But society, tired perhaps of the idol it had worshipped through two long years, chose to be extremely shocked. The chorus of adulation turned to a chorus of disgust. Ladies shuddered if the name of Byron was mentioned in their hearing. He was hissed and insulted in the public streets, and accused of every vice that the imagination of his traducers could

picture. His wife, who was regarded by all with the deepest pity and admiration, persistently refused to return to him. With rage and hatred in his heart Byron, in April, set sail from England, vowing that he would never return.

Shelley, meanwhile, had thrown himself headlong into a war against the injustices and abuses of his day. His gentle nature was continually shocked and outraged by the misery he saw in the world around him, and he blamed all existing laws and institutions for allowing such things to be. Christ's religion had been established in England for more than thirteen centuries, yet man still hated his brother man, and life was still a hideous struggle in which the weak were trampled under foot. Therefore religion was false, and must be abolished before the Golden Age could come. Marriage vows did not prevent men and women from being false and cruel to those whom they had sworn to love. Therefore marriage was a pernicious institution, and must go. Something after this fashion Shelley reasoned in his hot and generous youth, and he proceeded, with an absolute disregard for consequences, to carry out his principles in his actions. While he was a student at Oxford he published a pamphlet called *The Necessity of Atheism*, and was, in consequence, requested by the authorities to leave the university. His father, a wealthy and narrow-minded Sussex squire, cast him off in anger, and for a time Shelley lived poorly in London, not knowing where to turn for the money to buy his next meal. But nothing could make him retract one article of the creed he had professed. His simple habits made money a matter of indifference to him. He was a water drinker and a vegetarian, and he never thought about food until he grew hungry. Then he would dart into a baker's shop, buy a loaf of bread, and munch it composedly as he walked along the street. For clothes he had an equal disregard. He never wore a greatcoat, and seldom wore a hat. When he had money he bestowed it in lavish though not reckless charity; and of the world's opinion he was utterly regardless.

After a time an arrangement was made between Shelley and

his father, by which the young man was to have an allowance of £200 a year. Soon after this he married. His wife, Harriet, was a beautiful and gentle girl, of a position in life much lower than his own, whose harsh treatment by an unsympathetic father had excited his quixotic generosity. The pair led a wandering life, plunging into all sorts of schemes for the regeneration of mankind. Shelley spent his time, his energies and his money unsparingly in the causes he championed, and wrote political tracts and revolutionary poems with equal zest. In 1813 he published his first important work, *Queen Mab.* The poem was universally decried, and was denounced as both immoral and blasphemous. Through it Shelley was definitely brought before the public as an advocate of atheism and an apostle of revolution; and this character he has never wholly lost.

Shelley's marriage proved to be an unhappy one. In 1814 he separated from his wife, and in 1816 she committed suicide. The whole story is very painful, and although Shelley throughout acted strictly in accordance with his openly professed principles, he suffered acutely from self-reproach "at having brought Harriet in the first instance into an atmosphere of thought and life for which her strength of mind had not qualified her." Shelley subsequently married Mary Godwin, daughter of William Godwin, the philosopher and novelist, who had exercised a strong influence over the younger man's intellectual development.

Shelley by this time was receiving, by a new arrangement with his father, an income of £1000 a year. In 1816 he and Mary Godwin left England for Switzerland. They settled at Geneva, and here, very soon afterward they were joined by Lord Byron, fleeing in rage and despair from his detractors. For some months the poets lived in familiar daily intercourse. They occupied two villas at no great distance from each other, and they spent their days boating upon the lake and reading and talking together. The sweet and gentle-natured Shelley, so free from any thought of self, so full of enthusiasm for the cause of humanity, exerted a strong influence over the haughty,

egotistical, world-weary Byron. "He was," Byron declared, "the most gentle, the most amiable, and least worldly minded person I ever met; full of delicacy, disinterested beyond all other men, and possessing a degree of genius joined to simplicity as rare as it is admirable. He had formed to himself a *beau ideal* of all that is fine, high-minded, and noble, and he acted up to this ideal even to the very letter." In Shelley's presence Byron was at his best. His flippancy, his self-consciousness and his worldliness dropped from him in communion with that tender and lovely spirit, and all in him that was generous and noble responded to its influence. Gradually his rage and anger died. "I was in a wretched state of health," he says, "when I was in Geneva; but quiet and the lake soon set me up. I never led so moral a life as during my residence in that country."

In September the Shelleys returned to England, and Byron started on a tour through the Bernese Oberland. Returning to Geneva he took up poetic composition with vigour. *The Prisoner of Chillon* had been written during his tour, and a third canto of *Childe Harold* finished. This third canto, although nominally a part of the poem published in 1812, is in spirit and tone entirely different. "Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again," but this time with a spirit less self-absorbed, and an eye that can look with real and sympathetic insight upon the different objects that meet it. The twenty-first stanza brings us to the immortal lines on Waterloo, which, hackneyed as they are, must always sound with fresh beauty in the ear of one who loves lofty and impassioned verse. There follows the beautiful and famous simile of the broken mirror:

> Even as a broken mirror, which the glass
> In every fragment multiplies; and makes
> A thousand images of one that was,
> The same, and still the more, the more it breaks:
> And thus the heart will do which not forsakes.
> Living in shatter'd guise; and still, and cold,
> And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches,
> Yet withers on till all without is old,
> Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

Byron passes on to describe "the greatest, nor the worst of men," Napoleon:

> Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!
> She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name
> Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now
> That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame.

The pilgrim journeys on to that "exulting and abounding river" over which frowns "the castled crag of Drachenfels," and even his melancholy is softened by the beauty of the scene. From one picture of loveliness to another the poem passes. We see Lake Leman lying quiet in "the hush of night" and the "swift Rhone" cleaving its way between heights which appear "as lovers who have parted in hate." Clarens suggests a rhapsody on love and on Rousseau, Lausanne and Geneva an eloquent tribute to Gibbon and Voltaire. The canto closes with a passionate invocation to the little daughter he has left behind him in England.

Toward the end of 1816 Byron left Geneva and settled in Venice. Here the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* was finished. It opens with the well-known stanza beginning:

> I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
> A palace and a prison on each hand.

There follows one of the most beautiful of the many descriptions that have been written of this unique city. As he wanders on through Italy each town or village brings to his mind the memory of the great men associated with it, and Petrarch, Tasso, and Dante all are celebrated. At last Rome is reached, and the poem rises to its very highest point of impassioned grandeur.

> O Rome! my country! city of the soul!
> The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
> Lone mother of dead empires! and control
> In their shut breasts their petty misery.
> What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
> The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
> O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, ye!
> Whose agonies are evils of a day—
> A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of Nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers; dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

As the poet recounts the history, and passes in review the most famous treasures of the great city, thoughts and recollections rush to his mind. "The voice of Marius," said Sir Walter Scott, "could not sound more deep and solemn among the ruins of Carthage, than the strains of the pilgrim among the broken shrines and fallen statues of her subduer."

Byron's life at Venice was the wildest and most dissipated part of his whole career. Shelley's influence was withdrawn, and the reports that reached him from England of the stories concerning him current there, exasperated his haughty spirit, and drove him to find relief in the wildest of excesses. Time after time he ventured his life in dangerous exploits upon the sea, until the boatmen called him the "English fish" and the "sea-devil," and said that he "dived for his poetry." His temper seemed utterly reckless, and his hatred of England and everything English became almost a mania. Yet throughout these miserable years he was writing continually—brilliant, stormy, wonderful verses such as no one but Byron could have produced. But riotous living was affecting his health, and had he gone on in it much longer, his powers must have failed him. Happily the same influence which, in 1816, had done so much to help him toward a purer and wiser life was soon once more to come to his aid.

In 1818 Shelley and his wife again left England—this time never to return. After a suit in Chancery the relations of Shelley's first wife had succeeded—largely on the ground of his so-called immoral opinions and conduct—in obtaining a decree depriving him of the custody of her children. Shelley was heartbroken; and a wild fear lest the children of his second marriage might also be taken from him was one of the

motives which led him to seek a home abroad. They travelled through northern Italy, and in August Shelley, leaving his wife at the Bagni de Lucca, paid a visit to Byron in Venice. The old relations were taken up: the two poets rode and walked and talked together, and Byron once more became the "gentle, patient, unassuming companion," "cheerful, frank, witty" and fascinating, who appears in Shelley's description. Byron lent the Shelleys his villa at Este, near Venice, for the autumn, and here Shelley produced his beautiful description of the passing of a day which he called *Lines written among the Euganean Hills;* the first of that wonderful series of lyrics which belong to the last four years of his life. Most of his important longer works were also composed at this time, but of these we shall not speak in detail here. In them Shelley tried to express all the great ideas that filled his brain, all his plans for the world's regeneration, all his hatred of oppression and tyranny. They are full of the finest and truest poetry They show how the hot fire in Shelley's blood was gradually passing into the burning steady glow of a wiser and more effective enthusiasm, how the crudeness of his early years was mellowing into a wonderful ripeness and perfection. If Shelley had lived a few years longer he would probably have been as great a teacher as he is a poet, and the reproach that he gave to the world nothing fit for "human nature's daily food" would have been lifted from him.

But it is for his lyrics that Shelley will always be best remembered and best loved. They are not, as are the lyrics of the Elizabethans and the lyrics of Burns, primarily songs. The reader is so carried away by what Professor Myers has called the "exciting and elevating quality" of the poem that he is scarcely conscious of the beauties of its versification. Each lyric is like a pure, bright flame which owes the perfection of its form to its glowing heat and its irresistible tendency upward.

Great as are his poems, however, his personality was even more wonderful and delightful. "The truth was," wrote a later friend, Captain Trelawny, "Shelley loved everything

Shelley writing the Dedication of "The Revolt of Islam"
By Eyre Crowe, A.R.A.

better than himself. . . . All who heard him felt the charm of his simple, earnest manner." "Shelley's mental activity was infectious, he kept your brain in constant action." "He never laid aside his book and magic mantle; he waved his wand, and Byron, after a faint show of defiance, stood mute." Trelawny joined the little circle of friends who had gathered round Shelley in his Italian home, in January 1822. His famous account of his first meeting with the poet, though it belongs to a later date may be given here, for no other description could enable us to realize so fully the personality of the man who wrote the wonderful lyrics we are considering. Trelawny arrived on a visit to Captain and Mrs. Williams, Shelley's intimate friends. "The Williamses received me in their earnest, cordial manner; we had a great deal to communicate to each other, and were in loud and animated conversation, when I was rather put out by observing in the passage near the open door, opposite to where I sat, a pair of glittering eyes steadily fixed on mine; it was too dark to make out whom they belonged to. With the acuteness of a woman Mrs. Williams's eyes followed the direction of mine, and going to the doorway she laughingly said, 'Come in, Shelley, it's only our friend Tre just arrived.' Swiftly gliding in, blushing like a girl, a tall, thin stripling held out both his hands; and although I could hardly believe, as I looked at his flushed, feminine and artless face, that it could be the great poet, I returned his warm pressure. After the ordinary greetings and courtesies, he sat down and listened. I was silent from astonishment: was it possible this mild-looking, beardless boy, could be the veritable monster, at war with all the world?—excommunicated by the Fathers of the Church, deprived of his civil rights by the fiat of a grim Lord Chancellor, discarded by every member of his family, and denounced by the rival sages of our literature as the founder of a Satanic school? I could not believe it; it must be a hoax. He was habited like a boy, in a black jacket and trousers, which he seemed to have outgrown, or his tailor, as is the custom, had most shamefully stinted him in his 'sizings.' Mrs. Williams

saw my embarrassment, and to relieve me asked Shelley what book he had in his hand? His face brightened, and he answered briskly: 'Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso*—I am translating some passages in it.'

"'Oh, read it to us.'

"Shoved off from the shore of commonplace incidents that could not interest him, and fairly launched on a theme that did, he instantly became oblivious of everything but the book in his hand. The masterly manner in which he analysed the genius of the author, his lucid interpretation of the story, and the ease with which he translated into our language the most subtle and imaginative passages of the Spanish poet, were marvellous, as was his command of the two languages. After this touch of his quality I no longer doubted his identity; a dead silence ensued; looking up, I asked:

"'Where is he?'

"Mrs. Williams said, 'Who? Shelley? Oh, he comes and goes like a spirit, no one knows when or where.'"

Such was Shelley at the beginning of 1822, and such he was, substantially, when in 1818, he dreamed away that sunny October day among the Euganean Hills, and, looking down, saw where, "islanded" in that "green sea, The waveless plain of Lombardy":

> Underneath Day's azure eyes
> Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,

and saw, also, floating before his enraptured eyes, the vision that constantly haunted him,—that calm and happy place

> Where for me, and those I love,
> May a windless bower be built,
> Far from passion, pain, and guilt, . . .
> And the love which heals all strife
> Circling, like the breath of life,
> All things in that sweet abode
> With its own mild brotherhood.

But the time for the realization of this ideal was still very far off. Fresh trouble was quickly coming on poor Shelley. His little daughter fell ill, and died. Shelley suffered terribly, though his friends tell us that he said little, and was ready,

with his usual buoyancy of spirits, to join in the simple amusements of his little circle. But the lyrics written during that winter show that a deep-seated grief possessed him. Some of his melancholy was due to the state of his own health. He was growing stronger and the danger of consumption, which in England had seemed imminent, had passed away. But he was tormented with acute pains for which the doctors were at a loss to ascribe a cause, and with occasional spasms that endangered his life. The *Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples* in December 1818 contains that beautiful verse which is the cry of a gentle spirit heavily oppressed :

> Yet now despair itself is mild,
> Even as the winds and waters are ;
> I could lie down like a tired child,
> And weep away the life of care
> Which I have borne and yet must bear,—
> Till death like sleep might steal on me,
> And I might feel in the warm air
> My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
> Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Early in 1819 the Shelleys moved to Rome, and there, in June, Shelley's little son, William, died. He had now no children save those far away in England who were growing up with no knowledge of their father. His friends tell with what devotion he had nursed the boy in his short illness, and how utterly heartbroken he was when the end came. But grief seemed to drive him to poetical expression as a means of relief. At Leghorn, where he removed soon after his son's death, he resumed his great work *Prometheus Unbound*, and began and finished *The Cenci*. The first of these works contains the lyric at which many critics have cavilled, and some have sneered :

> Life of Life ! thy lips enkindle
> With their love the breath between them ;
> And thy smiles before they dwindle
> Make the cold air fire ; then screen them
> In those looks, where whoso gazes
> Faints, entangled in their mazes.

"What does it all mean ?" the critics have asked ; and even the most devoted student of Shelley might be puzzled to

put the verse into plain prose. Shelley did not hold the Wordsworthian theory that poetry is only prose, with metre superadded, and he found it difficult to express the conceptions of his fervent imagination in plain, deliberate language. But the obscurity is rather verbal than real; and the 'exciting and elevating' quality of Shelley's verse is nowhere more plainly felt than in this lyric.

The great year of 1819 saw not only the two long poems that have been mentioned, but also some shorter lyrics come into being. The most wonderful among these is the *Ode to the West Wind*, which to attempt to appraise here would be an impertinence. It belongs to those works which lie far above criticism and are apprehended not so much by the intelligence as by the spirit.

> O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
> Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
> Are driven like ghosts from an enchante fleeing,
>
> Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
> Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
> Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed
>
> The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
> Each like a corpse within its grave, until
> Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
>
> Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
> (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
> With living hues and odours plain and hill:
>
> Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
> Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

This was written at Florence, whither the Shelleys had gone in the autumn of 1819, and here *Prometheus Unbound* was finished. In January 1820 the wanderers found a resting-place at Pisa, where they remained until April 1822. Life here passed calmly and happily. Shelley's cousin, Captain Medwin, came out from England to stay with him, and he became intimate with the circle of the Mr. and Mrs. Williams who have before been mentioned. He wrote industriously, and his verses ranged from familiar epistles to inspired lyrics like *The Cloud* and the *Ode to a Skylark*, which are probably

the best known of all his works In December came the news that Keats had died at Rome, and Shelley's generous, but, as it proved, mistaken sympathy found expression in the great elegy, *Adonais*. In August 1821 he paid a visit to Lord Byron, who was then living at Ravenna. In order to be near Shelley, Byron removed to Pisa in November 1821, and from that time until the end of Shelley's life, which came seven months later, the two poets once more lived in familiar daily intercourse. They went sailing on the Arno and practised pistol-shooting together, then returned home and talked far into the night. Some part of each day Shelley spent in solitude, wandering in the great pinewood near Pisa, with a book, or a lyric in the making. The beautiful *Swiftly walk over the Western Wave*, belongs to this period, and Trelawny tells how he found the poet one day lying under a tree with the manuscript of the lyric *Ariel, to Miranda take*, which "might have been taken for a sketch of a marsh overgrown with bulrushes, and the blots for wild ducks." On the whole Byron's companionship was not favourable to Shelley's poetic activity. Shelley was so naturally humble-minded, and had such a sincere admiration for the genius of his friend that he was led to underrate his own powers and become discouraged. "What think you of Lord B.'s last volume?" he wrote. "In my opinion it contains finer poetry than has appeared in England since *Paradise Lost*." In 1822 he wrote to Leigh Hunt, "I do not write, I have lived too long near Lord Byron, and the sun has extinguished the glow-worm." Nevertheless, he was not without a just conception of the merits of his own poetry. "This I know," he once said, "that whether in prosing or in versing, there is something in my writings that shall live for ever."

In the spring of 1822 Byron took a villa near Leghorn, and the rest of the party left Pisa for a house at Lerici on the Gulf of Spezia, where they intended to spend the summer. Both Byron and Shelley, before leaving Pisa, had a yacht built for excursions on the sea. Byron's yacht was called the *Bolivar* and Shelley's the *Ariel*. In the *Ariel* Shelley spent the greater

part of each day, meditating his last great unfinished poem, *The Triumph of Life*, in which he sees pass by the great of all the ages in a slow majestic procession. The last words that he wrote were, " ' Then what is Life ? ' I cried." The time was rapidly coming for Shelley, when this, and all the questions that had vexed him on earth would trouble him no more.

On the 1st of July Shelley and his friend Williams started in the yacht *Ariel* for Leghorn, to meet Leigh Hunt, who was coming out to help Byron in establishing a newspaper which was to be called the *Liberal*, and which was to be used as a medium for the publication of the works which, from their daring, unconventional character his publishers might hesitate to accept. The project had been warmly supported by Shelley, who loved the kindly, open-hearted Hunt, and was anxious to help him to a position which would relieve him from the money difficulties in which he was involved. The travelling expenses of Hunt and his family had been met by means of a loan from Shelley, and on the news of their arrival he hastened to do what he could for their comfort. He established them in Byron's Palazzo at Leghorn, and early on the next day set out on the return voyage to Lerici. There was only one sailor on board with Williams and Shelley. In the afternoon a great tempest came on. It lasted for only twenty minutes, and after it was over, Trelawny, who was on board Byron's yacht in the harbour of Leghorn looked in vain for the little *Ariel*. She had gone down in that brief storm.

For a week the anxious friends searched all along the shore. On July 18, Shelley's body was cast up near Via Reggio. In one pocket of his jacket was a volume of Sophocles, in the other the poems of Keats, " doubled back, as if the reader, in the act of reading had hastily thrust it away." The other bodies were cast up some miles further along the coast. The body of Shelley was temporarily buried in the sand, and, on August 16, a pile was built there, and it was cremated. Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Trelawny were present. " The lonely and grand scenery that surrounded us so exactly harmonized with Shelley's genius, that I could imagine his spirit soaring over

us. The sea, with the islands of Gorgona, Cupraja and Elba, was before us ; old battlemented watch-towers stretched along the coast, backed by the marble-crested Apennines glistening in the sun, picturesque from their diversified outlines, and not a human dwelling was in sight." The ashes were laid in the burial-ground at Rome, near those of Keats, and of Shelley's son, William.

Less than two years later Byron also was dead. In July 1823 he, with Trelawny, sailed from Genoa to Greece, for the purpose of offering themselves as volunteers in the Greek War of Liberation. They arrived in Greece early in August and were received with great warmth. Byron was appointed to a command and behaved with the greatest bravery and wisdom. But his strength was not equal to the hardships of this new way of life. Food was scarce, and the house that he occupied was situated on low, boggy ground, from which constant exhalations arose. On April 11, 1824, he fell ill with rheumatic fever, and on the 19th he died.

In Greece he was deeply and universally mourned. His body was embalmed, and the funeral service performed at Missolonghi, with all the honours commonly given to a prince of the royal line. Afterward the remains were taken to England, and buried in the village church at Hucknall.

On the 22nd of the previous July, the day on which he completed his thirty-sixth year, Byron had written his last poem, the two concluding verses of which may serve in some sense as his epitaph.

If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live ?*
  The land of honourable death
Is here :—up to the field, and give
          Away thy breath !

Seek out—less often sought than found—
  A soldier's grave, for thee the best ;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
          And take thy rest.

CHAPTER XLIII

ENDYMION

DURING the first quarter of the nineteenth century, ushered in by the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*, there was formed in London a little group of literary men which was only second in importance to that other group whose members were making the name of the Lake Country famous. Chief among these—the "Cockneys," as they were called by scornful reviewers—was Leigh Hunt. He stood first not because he was the greatest writer, but because of his influence over his companions. Through him the different members of the group were drawn and kept together. At his pleasant house at Hampstead, they all met, and at his frequent and informal supper-parties works which have since become English classics were suggested or discussed. Among those who came often was Shelley, a tall, slim, youthful figure with bright wild eyes, and pale, beautiful face. Charles Lamb came sometimes from his lodgings in the Inner Temple, and sat among the company shy and silent, until excitement and good fellowship unloosed his tongue, and drove from his sweet and delicate face the lines of suffering commonly to be seen there. William Hazlitt, the essayist, worn and thin and saturnine, gave pungency to the conversation by his rough and downright criticisms. Horace Smith (author of *The Baby's Debut*), and his no less witty brother vied with their host and with Charles Lamb in the making of puns, which, on these evenings flowed in a continuous stream. Charles Cowden Clarke, honourably known by his work in connexion with the plays of Shakespeare, listened and commented in his quiet sensible fashion, and there were many other guests who, well known

in their own day, have not been kept in remembrance by later generations. Leigh Hunt himself, and the place of meeting shall be described in the words of Shelley, written some years after, from his home in Italy in a poetical *Letter to Maria Gisborne*

> You will see Hunt ; one of those happy souls
> Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom
> This world would smell like what it is, a tomb ;
> Who is, what others seem. His room no doubt,
> Is still adorned by many a case from Shout,
> With graceful flowers tastefully placed about ;
> And coronals of bay from ribbons hung,
> And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung,
> The gifts of the most learn'd among some dozens
> Of female friends, sisters-in-law, and cousins.
> And there is he with his eternal puns,
> Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns
> Thundering for money at a poet's door ;
> Alas ! it is no use to say, " I'm poor ! "—
> Or oft in graver mood, when he will look
> Things wiser than were ever read in book,
> Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness

One evening in the spring of 1816, Cowden Clarke brought with him to Hunt's cottage some poems in manuscript written by a friend of his, John Keats. Keats, he explained, was the son of a livery stable proprietor, and had been a scholar at his (Cowden Clarke's) father's school at Enfield. He had afterward been apprenticed to a surgeon, and had come up to London in 1814 to study at Guy's Hospital. He was not yet twenty-one years old, and was living with his two brothers in lodgings in St. Thomas's Street. Hunt and Horace Smith, who happened to be with him, were surprised and delighted at the quality of the poems. They eagerly questioned Cowden Clarke about the personality of the author, and begged him to bring John Keats, as soon as possible, to one of their evening gatherings. Accordingly, there accompanied Cowden Clarke on his next visit a slight, short, but well-proportioned youth with a countenance " of singular beauty and brightness " and an expression " as if he had been looking on some glorious sight." This was John Keats.

Keats soon became very intimate at the Hampstead cottage. Hunt's genial cheerfulness and optimistic view of life raised

the spirits of the younger man and encouraged him in his work. The love of beauty, which in Keats was a passion, existed in Hunt in the milder form of a keen capacity for sensuous enjoyment, and the two luxuriated together over green fields, and blue skies and summer rain—over their favourite books, especially the *Faerie Queene*, and the literature of ancient Greece, which latter, however, Keats could read only in translations. His appreciation of the cordial hospitality offered him by Hunt was keen, and is recorded in several of his poems. One of these tells of his feelings on the lonely walk home after he had left his friend's house.

> For I am brimful of the friendliness
> That in a little cottage I have found.

Keats soon became known to all Hunt's intimates. Shelley he did not meet until the spring of 1817, and then he responded but coldly to the advances which the other made with such warmth and eagerness. He suspected Shelley, the heir to an old and wealthy baronetcy, of some hidden contempt for the son of a keeper of livery stables. He was, says Hunt, "a little too sensitive on the score of his origin," and "felt inclined to see in every man of birth a sort of natural enemy." So the two poets, though they met many times during the months that followed, never really became friends.

All this time Keats was going on with his studies at the hospital, and was doing his work steadily and conscientiously, though without enthusiasm. In October 1816 he came of age, and, encouraged by his friends and by his two brothers, who were among his most sincere admirers, he resolved to devote himself entirely to poetry. The brothers had inherited a small sum of money, enough for present necessities, though not enough to afford them a permanent income, and with this very insufficient barrier between himself and want, Keats made his venture. In March 1817 he published his first volume of poems. They were not of any very great poetical merit, the well-known sonnet on Chapman's Homer stood highest. But they showed rich promise of better things in their intense appreciation of the beautiful, and their note of

John Keats
William Hilton, R.A.

entire abandonment to poetic impulse. "Here is a young poet," wrote Leigh Hunt, in his paper, *The Examiner*, "giving himself up to his own impressions, and revelling in real poetry for its own sake." Hunt's personal knowledge of Keats helped him to a true appreciation of the poems, and his review was marked equally by kindliness and insight. But other less interested critics saw nothing in the little volume to call for special notice. Few copies were sold. A public that was still raving over *Childe Harold* and *The Corsair* could scarcely be expected to admire the quieter and very different beauties contained in these early poems of Keats, and the reviewers were still occupied with the 'Lake Poets' and Wordsworth's *Excursion*. But the turn of the 'Cockney School' was soon to come.

Keats accepted the failure of his first venture in a manly and modest spirit. He was not disheartened, but was, instead, stirred up to greater efforts. His friends thought that retirement and solitude would help to mature his powers for the accomplishment of some really great work. In April 1817, therefore, Keats left London and went to stay at the Isle of Wight.

Unwonted solitude among new and lovely surroundings wrought Keats to such a state of excited sensibility as drove him to poetic composition. The day after his arrival at the Isle of Wight he sent to one of his friends the beautiful sonnet *On the Sea*, beginning:

> It keeps eternal whisperings around
> Desolate shores, and with its mighty spell
> Gluts twice ten thousand caverns.

"I find I cannot do without poetry," he wrote, in the letter that accompanied the sonnet, "without eternal poetry; half the day will not do—the whole of it. I began with a little, but habit has made me a leviathan. I had become all in a tremble from not having written anything of late: the sonnet overleaf did me good; I slept the better last night for it; this morning, however, I am nearly as bad again. I shall forthwith begin my *Endymion*."

That this overwrought condition was not entirely healthy Keats himself was fully conscious. "In a week or so," he wrote to Leigh Hunt, "I became not over-capable in my upper stories, and set off pell-mell for Margate." At Margate worries concerning money brought another disturbing influence. "Truth is," wrote Keats, "I have a horrid Morbidity of Temperament, which has shown itself at intervals; it is, I have no doubt, the greatest Enemy and stumbling-block I have to fear." Yet through excitement and dejection *Endymion* went steadily on. Keats was bravely trying to combat the extreme sensibility which tended to make him the slave of each present impulse. He had set himself a task which demanded sustained effort, and that task he meant to fulfil. "I will begin," he wrote,

> Now while I cannot hear the city's din;
> Now while the early budders are just new,
> And run in mazes of the youngest hue
> About old forests; while the willow trails
> Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails
> Bring home increase of milk And, as the year
> Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer
> My little boat, for many quiet hours,
> With streams that deepen freshly into bowers,
> Many and many a verse I hope to write,
> Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,
> Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees
> Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
> I may be near the middle of my story.
> O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
> See it half finish'd: but let Autumn bold,
> With universal tinge of sober gold
> Be all about me when I make an end.

After a short stay at Canterbury with his brother Tom—who was already in an advanced stage of consumption, the disease from which their mother had died—the poet returned to London. The brothers moved to new lodgings at Hampstead. Here their old friends were all around them, and new friendships were speedily formed. The little party that, during the winter, had met in Hunt's cottage, now held converse on the breezy heath, and here, walking up and down, Keats would recite to his friends the passages in the poem he was

writing that seemed to him most worthy of their attention. His beautiful voice had in it those low rich tones that stir the heart, and as he went on, half-chanting the fervid, melodious lines, his dark glowing eyes took on an "inward look, perfectly divine, like a Delphian priestess who saw visions." It is no wonder that the friends who heard him never forgot that summer of 1817, and have told us of its golden days in tender, fervent words. Keats was happy in this that all his life a little band of devoted friends reverenced him as a poet and loved him as a man. They neither loved nor reverenced him less because often after an impassioned recital his mood would suddenly change, and he would burst into hearty boyish laughter that preluded a string of jokes and nonsense which allowed no one to be serious again for the rest of that meeting; nor because he was obstinately fixed in his own ideas and opinions and upheld them with pugnacity.

Shelley was strongly interested in the progress of *Endymion*, and invited Keats to stay with him at his house at Great Marlow, and continue the work there. But Keats declined the invitation, perhaps suspecting patronage, perhaps feeling that he could write better in his own home. In November *Endymion* was finished, and in the spring of the next year it was published.

Its story is the story of the beautiful youth who, as the classic legend tells, was beloved by the moon. By her power he was cast into an eternal sleep on Mount Latmus, and here every night she visited him, having inspired him with a love equal to her own. This theme Keats expanded and embroidered in his own rich and glowing fashion. The poem is full of crudities and of lapses which, if we like to use a harsh name, may even be called absurdities, but it is nevertheless a great and memorable work. Its opening line has passed into a proverb, and the passage which follows is typical, in its glowing beauty, of the finest parts of the poem.

> A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a sleep

Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in ; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season ; the mid forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms :
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead ;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read :
And endless fountains of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

The poem does not entirely fulfil the promise of this beginning. Taken as a whole it is a confused and almost formless piece of work, open to criticism at almost every point. But the richness of the verse and the fine harmonies that rise and fall and die away and rise again as it proceeds, draw the reader on from one beautiful passage to the next, which never lies very far away. The preface which Keats wrote to this work is a memorable one. "Knowing within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

"What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press ; nor should they if I thought a year's castigation would do them any good ; it will not : the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away : a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live."

No self-criticism could have been conceived in a juster or a

saner spirit, and this preface goes far toward clearing Keats from the charge of feverish vanity which is one of the many charges that have been brought against him.

A month or so after *Endymion* was published, Keats started on a walking tour through Scotland with his friend Charles Brown. The expedition was a disastrous one. Bad food and exposure to the weather made Keats so ill that early in August he was obliged to give up the rest of the tour and go home from Inverness as quickly as possible. From this illness he never really recovered. His hereditary tendency to consumption developed rapidly, and in little more than two years brought his life to an end.

He arrived in London just in time for the reviews of *Endymion* which had appeared in the leading magazines. *Blackwood's* had for some time been devoting itself to the castigation of the Cockney School, and Keats had already been referred to as an "amiable bardling," "the puling satellite of the arch-offender and king of Cockaigne, Hunt." In the August number *Blackwood* settled down to demolish his new poem. The article, like others of the series, was signed Z, and the name of the writer has never been certainly ascertained; it was probably Lockhart, son-in-law to Sir Walter Scott, who was on the staff of *Blackwood* and had by the sharpness of his reviews gained for himself the name of the 'Scorpion.' "The frenzy of the *Poems*," the writer says, "was bad enough in its way; but it did not alarm us half so seriously as the calm, settled, imperturbable, drivelling idiocy of *Endymion*. . . . Back to the shop, Mr. John, back to plaster, pills, and ointment boxes." In September *The Quarterly Review* followed with an article of a similar character. The writer, after acknowledging that he had only read the first book of *Endymion*, of which he could make nothing, goes on to accuse 'Johnny Keats' of being a mere copyist of Mr. Leigh Hunt, only "ten times more tiresome and absurd than his prototype." "It is not," he says, "that the author has not powers of language, rays of fancy, and gleams of genius—he has all these; but he is, unhappily, a disciple of the new school of what has been some-

where called Cockney poetry; which may be defined to consist of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language."

Keats, who had himself been strongly conscious of the defects of his work, was less moved by these reviews than were his indignant friends. The popular idea of his having been "snuffed out by an article," is entirely false. "Praise or blame," he wrote, to a friend who had sent him various cuttings from newspapers, in which his work was defended, and his critics attacked, "has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critique on his own Works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* could possibly inflict." It is true that by this time his health began rapidly to fail, but that was due not to the reviews, but to the development of his consumptive tendency, and to the violence of the attachment that he conceived for a Miss Fanny Brawne, a neighbour of his friend, Charles Brown. His passion took entire possession of him, and the impossibility of marriage—his own money was now all spent, and he was living on loans from his friends—constantly tormented him.

Yet in spite of these troubles his poetic work went on. In 1820 was published a volume containing some of his finest poems. *Lamia* and *Hyperion*, like *Endymion*, deal with the life of the ancient Greeks. *Isabella* and *The Eve of St. Agnes* are romantic poems, touching the old mediæval legends. The very finest work in the book is contained in the three great odes—*Ode to a Nightingale*, *Ode to a Grecian Urn*, *Ode to Autumn*. In them the promise of *Endymion* is grandly fulfilled.

While this volume was passing through the press, came Keats's first attack of hæmorrhage, showing that the disease from which he was suffering had reached an acute stage. After some weeks he rallied, but the attacks recurred, and his health declined rapidly. The news of the success of his book and of a favourable notice in *The Edinburgh Review*, though it

cheered, could not help him. As the summer drew to an end the doctors strongly advised him to leave England for Italy Shelley, who was then at Pisa, wrote with the utmost kindness and delicacy inviting Keats to be his guest for the winter. But this invitation, like the former one, was declined, in a letter which, however, shows the writer's deep appreciation of the friendliness of the offer. Keats decided at last to go to Rome, and, accompanied by his friend, Joseph Severn, he set out on September 18. The story of these last months of Keats's life is a story of ever-increasing bodily and mental agony, but it is made beautiful by the unselfish devotion of Severn, who gave up his own work and all thoughts of his own advancement to tend his dying friend. On February 23, 1821, the end came, quietly and peacefully.

Keats was buried in the English burying-place at Rome. On his tomb was inscribed the epitaph that he himself had asked Severn to place there : " Here lies one whose name was writ in water." We know now how mistaken was this mournful self-judgment. The name of the poet who died before he had finished his twenty-fifth year is written in immortal letters on the roll of fame, among the names of the greatest of his brethren. His memory lives in his own poems, and in Shelley's magnificent elegy, *Adonais*.

He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;
  Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
  Can touch him not and torture not again.
  From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
  A heart grown cold, a head grown grey, in vain ;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

CHAPTER XLIV

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

IN 1796, when Fanny Burney (or Madame d'Arblay as she then was) published almost her last novel, *Camilla*, the subscription list contained all the greatest names in England; but there was one name, then quite unknown, which to-day we regard with as much interest as those of even Edmund Burke and Warren Hastings: "Miss J. Austen, Steventon Rectory." The noble ladies who undertook the management of Madame d'Arblay's subscription list knew nothing of Miss J. Austen, save that she had paid the guinea entitling her to a copy of *Camilla;* and in due time this was dispatched. It travelled down by coach through Winchester and on to Basingstoke, and was dropped, we expect, at the inn at the corner of Popham Lane, which was the point on the high road nearest to Steventon Rectory. From there it was probably fetched by one of the rectory servants who brought it back through a network of lanes to the small and straggling village of Steventon, where, at the old-fashioned house in the valley, two sisters were eagerly awaiting him. The younger of these was a slim, graceful girl of twenty, with a bright intelligent face, a brilliant complexion, and hazel eyes full of fun and laughter, though they could look demure enough upon occasion. This was Miss Jane Austen, youngest of the rector of Steventon's seven children. The other sister, Cassandra, was three years older than Jane, and resembled her in general appearance. We can imagine these two girls as they slipped out on this particular November afternoon to watch for the eagerly expected letters and parcels. They were dressed according to the fashion of the period, in long, narrow-

skirted, high-waisted muslin gowns, with thin heelless slippers fastened by crossed elastic. Each girl's hair was neatly tucked away under a close-fitting muslin cap. They must have shivered as they waited in the gathering gloom for the return of their messenger.

Camilla was received with rapture. The two girls, and indeed the whole family were great novel-readers, and had read and cried over *Evelina* and *Cecilia* long before. They were interested in the author even more than in her books. Vague scraps of gossip only had reached them concerning the life of Fanny Burney, but they knew how she had published when she was only sixteen—for so the common story ran—a novel that had taken the town by storm. The story of her success, and of how she had become the idol of London society and the favourite of royalty had a special interest for the younger sister. Fanny Burney had done this, then why not Jane Austen, for she, too, had, from her childhood, been fond of scribbling. In the sisters' room upstairs there was a little pile of copy-books, full of tales written in her small and even hand. There was also, at the very time *Camilla* was received, one particular story, lately begun, in which the young authoress felt a tender pride. She had called it *First Impressions*, because it was her earliest serious attempt to paint the people whom she saw around her every day—the country squires, with their wives and daughters, the clergymen, the fine ladies, the dashing officers, and the well-to-do townsfolk who were to be met at the balls and assemblies with which the neighbourly Hampshire families relieved the tedium of country life. No one enjoyed these gatherings more than did the lively Miss Austen, and no one observed with a keener or more humorous eye the foibles and absurdities of the company. In a letter written to her sister, giving an account of a ball that had taken place while Cassandra was away from home, she said: "There were very few beauties, and such as there were not very handsome. Miss Iremonger did not look well, and Mrs. Blount was the only one much admired. She appeared exactly as she did in September, with the same broad face,

diamond bandeau, white shoes, pink husband, and fat neck. The two Miss Coxes were there: I traced in one the remains of the vulgar broad-featured girl who danced at Enham eight years ago. The other is refined into a nice composed-looking girl, like Catherine Bigg. I looked at Sir Thomas Champneys, and thought of poor Rosalie; I looked at his daughter and thought her a queer animal with a long neck." There is a touch of ill-nature in the description, but from this Miss Austen's published works are completely free. Like Elizabeth Bennet, the heroine of her first novel, she "dearly loves a laugh," but, like Elizabeth again, she disclaims being classed with those people "whose first object in life is a joke." "I hope I never ridicule what is wise or good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies, *do* divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can."

First Impressions went steadily on, and within the year it was finished. It seems to have been read to the family and not only to Jane's especial confidante, Cassandra, for in November 1797, the Rev. George Austen wrote to a publisher in London, asking him if he would undertake the publication of "a novel in three volumes about the length of Miss Burney's *Evelina*." A prompt negative was returned, and the idea of publication was apparently dropped.

Whether it was before or after this faint effort to find a publisher that the title of the novel was changed, we do not know, but *First Impressions*, when it at last attained the dignity of print, appeared as *Pride and Prejudice*. It has been suggested, and the suggestion bears with it almost a conviction of its accuracy, that the idea of this title was given by Miss Burney's *Cecilia*. "The whole of this unfortunate business," declares one of the characters, in the last chapter, when the plot is being wound up, "has been the result of PRIDE and PREJUDICE." The words occur, printed in large type, three times on one page, and may well have caught Miss Austen's eye as she turned over the leaves of this favourite book.

Almost immediately after *First Impressions* was finished, Miss Austen began another story, founded on an early sketch,

Jane Austen

written in the form of letters, entitled *Eleanor and Marianne.* This developed into the novel *Sense and Sensibility.* In 1798 a third story, *Northanger Abbey*, was begun. Its scene is laid at Bath, to which fashionable resort Miss Austen had paid frequent visits. This was written more slowly, and was not finished until 1803. By this time the Austen family had left Steventon Rectory and were settled at Bath, Mr. Austen having given up the living to his eldest son. At first Jane had been in despair at the thought of leaving all the familiar surroundings, but she soon began to look favourably upon the proposed change. "I get more and more reconciled to the idea of our removal," she wrote. "We have lived long enough in this neighbourhood; the Basingstoke balls are certainly on the decline; there is something interesting in the bustle of going away and the prospect of spending future summers by the sea or in Wales is very delightful. For a time we shall now possess many of the advantages which I have often thought of with envy in the wives of sailors or soldiers. It must not be generally known, however, that I am not sacrificing a great deal in quitting the country, or I can expect to inspire no tender interest in those we leave behind."

After much tribulation connected with house-hunting, of which Jane tells in the most lively style in her letters, the family was established at a house in Sydney Place. The house now bears a tablet with the inscription, "Here lived Jane Austen from 1801–1805." During this time she finished *Northanger Abbey* and sketched a new book, *The Watsons*, which, however, she never finished. She entered with zest into the enlarged opportunities for social enjoyment. "I dressed myself as well as I could," she wrote, describing her first ball at Bath, "and had all my finery much admired at home. By nine o'clock my uncle, aunt and I entered the Rooms, and linked Miss Winstone on to us. Before tea it was rather a dull affair; but then tea did not last long, for there was only one dance, danced by four couples surrounded by about an hundred people dancing in the Upper Rooms at Bath! After tea we cheered up; the breaking up of private

parties sent some scores more to the ball, and though it was shockingly and inhumanly thin for this place, there were people enough, I suppose, to have made five or six very pretty Basingstoke assemblies."

Before the Austens left Bath *Northanger Abbey* was offered to a bookseller there, and bought by him for ten pounds. He probably thought, on looking through it that the strong local element would bring a sufficient sale to make its publication profitable; but further consideration seems to have led him to change his opinion, for he kept it unpublished and unnoticed for thirteen years.

In 1805 Jane Austen's father died, and at the end of the year she, with her sister Cassandra and her mother, went to live at Southampton, near her brother Frank and his wife. Here they stayed until 1809, when they moved to a cottage at Chawton, north-west of Winchester. In the familiar country of her youth, Jane, after a long interval of silence, once more began to write. One of her nieces gives an amusing account of how she worked at these later books during a visit to her brother's house. "Aunt Jane," she said, "would sit very quietly at work beside the fire in the Godmersham library, then suddenly burst out laughing, jump up, cross the room to a distant table with papers lying upon it, write something down, returning presently and sitting down quietly to her work again." She also remembered "how her aunt would take the elder girls into an upstairs room and read to them something that produced peals of laughter, to which the little ones on the wrong side of the door listened, thinking it very hard that they should be shut out from hearing what was so delightful."

In 1811 Miss Austen published at her own expense *Sense and Sensibility*, written thirteen years before. Her name was not disclosed, the title-page simply bearing the words, 'By a Lady,' but no attempt was made to conceal her identity. The book had a satisfactory, though not a remarkable sale, and encouraged by this Jane, in 1812, set to work on *Mansfield Park*. In 1813 appeared *Pride and Prejudice*, the bookseller

this time taking the risk. "I want to tell you," wrote Jane to Cassandra, "that I have got my own darling child from London"; and later, "Miss B. dined with us on the very day of the book's coming, and in the evening we fairly set at it, and read half the first volume to her. . . . She was amused, poor soul! *That* she could not help, you know, with two such people to lead the way, but she really does seem to admire Elizabeth. I must confess that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like *her* at least, I do not know. . . . Upon the whole I am quite vain enough and well satisfied enough. The work is rather too light and bright and sparkling; it wants shade, it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn specious nonsense, about something unconnected with the story; an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott or the history of Buonaparte or something that would form a contrast, and bring the reader with increased delight to the playfulness and epigrammatism of the general style." It will be seen that Miss Austen was perfectly aware of the merits of her work. Her praise, however, is discriminating, and shows that she possessed fine critical faculty. We may be thankful that she did not follow out her own playful suggestion, and attempt to give her work the serious character which, according to some of her critics, it lacked, by inserting among her exquisitely truthful and natural descriptions passages of 'solemn, specious nonsense.'

How real to her were the characters she had known so intimately and so exclusively for fifteen years is shown by a letter written during a visit paid to her brother Henry in London in the spring of 1813. She is describing an exhibition of the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds from which she has just returned. She tried, she says, to discover among the portraits one that would stand for Elizabeth Bennet, but failed to do so. "I can only imagine that Darcy prizes any picture of her too much to like it should be exposed to the public eye. I can imagine he would have that sort of feeling—that mixture

of love, pride, and delicacy." She found, however, a picture which represented exactly her idea of Elizabeth's sister, Jane. "Mrs. Bingley's is exactly herself—size, shaped face, features, and sweetness; there never was a greater likeness. She is dressed in a white gown with green ornaments, which convinces me of what I had always supposed, that green was a favourite colour with her."

When Charlotte Brontë read *Pride and Prejudice,* after the publication of her own wild and tempestuous *Jane Eyre* had made her famous, she called it "an accurate, daguerreotyped portrait of a commonplace face! a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck. I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen in their elegant but confined houses." The writer of *Pride and Prejudice,* so this sister-author opined, had "not so much even as a speaking acquaintance with the stormy sisterhood of the passions." To some extent this criticism is just. Jane Austen does not concern herself with great questions, she touches none of the vast problems which are of such vital import to suffering humanity; she sounds no spiritual depths, she rises to no sublime heights of passion or of rapture. She paints with the minutest accuracy the life she saw, and she puts in one fine stroke after another with the sureness of touch and feeling for effect which distinguishes the true artist. All her characters are drawn from five or six well-to-do country families; none of them possess any very striking qualities, none of them do anything particularly shocking or particularly noble; yet each one stands out with an individuality and likeableness (or the reverse) which is all his own, and our interest in the unexciting, brightly told story never flags. To have accomplished these things is surely to have earned the name of a great writer. Macaulay declares Jane Austen to be among those who, in character-painting, "have approached nearest to the manner of the great master," Shakespeare. "The world of pathos and passion," says Professor Raleigh, "is present in her work

by implication. . . . The folly of some of her characters implies the existence of wisdom ; the selfishness and pettiness of others involve the ideas of disinterestedness and magnanimity, just as a picture painted in cold tints would lose its meaning if there were no blue and red in the scheme of the universe. To ask for all colours, always, within the limits of the frame, is absurd."

Between 1813 and 1816 Miss Austen wrote her last two novels, *Emma*, the most finished of all her works, and *Persuasion*, the most subdued and tender in tone. *Northanger Abbey* was bought back from the Bath bookseller (who had no idea that it was written by the now celebrated authoress until the transaction was completed) for the same sum that he had given for it, and was published a few months after her death. In May 1817, after a painful illness, her quiet, happy, uneventful life ended. She was buried in Winchester Cathedral, and on her tomb are inscribed words which tell how she was regarded by those who knew her as a woman, and not only as an authoress. " The benevolence of her heart, the sweetness of her temper, and the extraordinary endowments of her mind obtained the regard of all who knew her, and the warmest love of her immediate connexions."

CHAPTER XLV

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL: WAVERLEY

FOUR years after the appearance of the *Lyrical Ballads*, there came from the Edinburgh press a volume which, in its way, was almost as significant of the new spirit that was working in English poetry as that famous book itself. This was the first volume of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, a collection of Scottish ballads edited by Walter Scott. We have seen Walter Scott before, when, as a shy young law-student of sixteen, he sat silent in Dr. Fergusson's drawing-room, overawed by the presence of the great Burns. Even then he had begun his work of collecting the old ballads of the Border, though with no purpose of publication, but through pure love of the country-side and its stories. Every half-holiday saw him setting out, with a few friends whose tastes were similar to his own, on a long ramble through the rural districts round about Edinburgh. Many an odd verse of a ballad and many a strange story he picked up from the country folk who were always ready to talk to the bright-faced youth who met them with such hearty friendliness. Sometimes these rambles grew into long excursions. We read that on one occasion the party found themselves thirty miles from Edinburgh, without a sixpence between them. "We were put to our shifts," says Walter Scott, "but we asked every now and then at a cottage door for a drink of water, and one or two of the good wives, observing our worn-out looks, brought forth milk in place of water, so that with that, and hips and haws, we were little the worse." He himself, in spite of his lameness, footed it as gallantly as any of the little band.

When he reached home, his father, a grave Scotch lawyer asked him how he had managed to get food during so long an excursion on his scanty store of money. "Pretty much like the young ravens," the son answered; "I only wished I had been as good a player on the flute as poor George Primrose in *The Vicar of Wakefield*. If I had his art, I should like nothing better than to tramp like him from cottage to cottage all over the world." "I doubt," said his father, who entirely disapproved of such tastes in a young student of law, "I greatly doubt, sir, you were born for nae better than a gangrel scrape-gut"—which is to say, a wandering fiddler. Such was not the fate reserved for Walter Scott, but these country excursions went far toward deciding that law should take but a second place in his life-work.

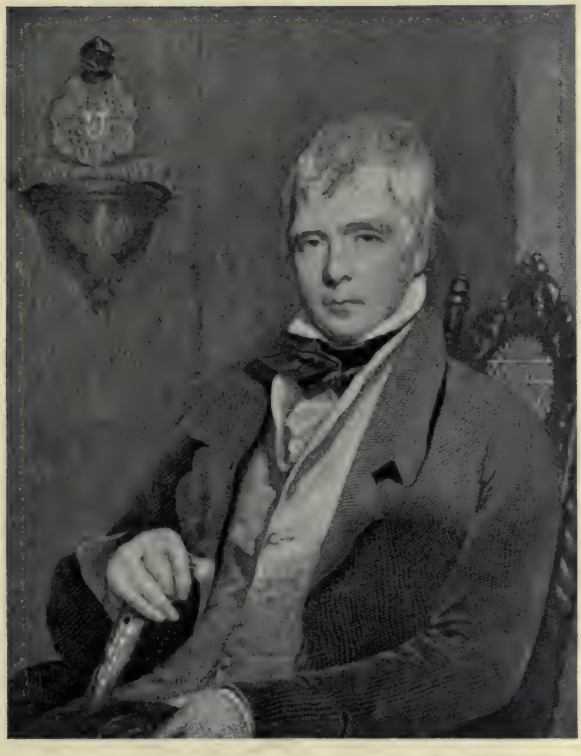
As he grew older, and became more his own master, these jaunts lengthened into "raids," as he called them, lasting for several weeks. "During seven successive years," writes his son-in-law and biographer, John Gibson Lockhart, "Scott made a *raid* into Liddesdale with Mr. Shortreed, sheriff substitute of Roxburghshire, who knew the district well, for his guide; exploring every rivulet to its source, and every ruined peel (castle) from foundation to battlement. . . . There was no inn or public-house of any kind in the whole valley; the travellers passed from the shepherd's hut to the minister's manse, and again from the cheerful hospitality of the manse to the rough and jolly welcome of the homestead; gathering, wherever they went, songs and tunes, and occasionally more tangible relics of antiquity. . . . To these rambles Scott owed much of the materials of his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. . . .

But how soon he had any definite object before him in his researches, seems very doubtful. "He was *makin' himsell* a' the time," said Mr. Shortreed; "but he didna ken maybe what he was about till years had passed: at first he thought o' little, I dare say, but the queerness and the fun. . . . Eh me! such an endless fund o' humour and drollery as he then had wi' him! Never ten yards but we were either laughing

or roaring and singing. Wherever we stopped, how brawlie he suited himsel' to everybody! He aye did as the lave did; never made himsel' the great man, or took ony airs in the company."

When it did occur to Scott to turn his miscellaneous gatherings to account he set to work with characteristic energy to make his collection complete. He obtained the help of various friends, who became almost as enthusiastic in the matter as he was himself. He wrote for it, also, several original ballads, including the celebrated *Eve of St. John.* The collection increased rapidly, and finally filled three volumes instead of the one originally contemplated. The first and second volumes were published in 1802, and in a letter written by Scott during the same year we find the earliest mention of his first important original work, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.* "In the third volume," he says, "I intend to publish Cadyow Castle, a historical sort of a ballad upon the death of the Regent Murray and besides this, a long poem of my own. It will be a kind of romance of Border chivalry, in a light-horseman sort of stanza."

In the Introduction to the edition of his poems published in 1830, Scott tells us how the *Lay* gradually took form, but he tells it in much more lively fashion in a letter written to Miss Seward, the poetess, in 1805. "I began," he says, "and wandered forward, like one in a pleasant country, getting to the top of one hill to see a prospect, and to the bottom of another to enjoy a shade; and what wonder if my course has been devious and desultory, and many of my excursions altogether unprofitable to the advance of my journey? The Dwarf Page is also an excrescence, and I plead guilty to all the censures concerning him. The truth is, he has a history, and it is this: The story of Gilpin Horner was told by an old gentleman to Lady Dalkeith, and she, much diverted with his actually believing so grotesque a tale, insisted that I should make it into a Border ballad. I don't know if ever you saw my lovely chieftainess—if you have you must be aware that it is *impossible* for anyone to refuse her request, as she has



Sir Walter Scott 450
C. R. Leslie, R.A.

more of the angel in her face and temper than anyone alive, so that if she had asked me to write a ballad on a broomstick; I must have attempted it. I began a few verses to be called the Goblin Page ; and they lay long by me, till the applause of some friends whose judgment I valued, induced me to resume the poem ; so on I wrote, knowing no more than the man in the moon how I was to end. At length the story appeared so uncouth, that I was fain to put it into the mouth of my old Minstrel—lest the nature of it should be misunderstood, and I should be suspected of setting up a new school of poetry, instead of a feeble attempt to imitate the old. In the process of the romance, the page, intended to be a principal person in the work, contrived (from the baseness of his natural propensities) to slink downstairs into the kitchen, and now he must e'en abide there."

Scott's 'lovely chieftainess,' Lady Dalkeith, afterward Duchess of Buccleuch, was the wife of the head of that clan or family of which Scott was proud to proclaim himself a member. During the years he spent at Ashestiel (1804–1812) he was in the midst of the Buccleuch estates. Here grew up the friendship with the family which lasted for the rest of his life. He puts into the mouth of his old harper the expression of those feelings of fealty and devotion to the 'Duchess' of the story which he himself felt for the Duchess he knew so well.

A year or two before Scott began to write his *Lay* he had heard recited by Sir John Stoddart Coleridge's then unpublished poem, *Christabel.* The metre of this poem had remained in his memory and he adopted it, or something like it, for his own work. The story of Gilpin Horner was one which was current in the district. One night some men returning to their homes at Eskdale Muir, on the Border heard a voice calling "tint, tint, tint" (lost). They called, and a misshapen child dwarf appeared. It lived at Eskdale for some time, then one evening a voice was heard crying "Gilpin Horner." The dwarf answered, "That is me, I must away," and disappeared, at the call, it was supposed, of the devil, who thus reclaimed his own.

The Lay of the Last Minstrel, like most of Scott's works, was written very rapidly. When he once got fairly started, he tells us, he wrote at the rate of a canto a week. It soon exceeded the limits originally proposed for it, and the idea of including it in the third volume of the *Minstrelsy* was given up. Three years passed before it was published; in the first week of January 1805 it appeared and met with a marvellous success, which, as Lockhart says, "at once decided that literature should form the main business of Scott's life." "It would be great affectation," he says in the Introduction of 1830, "not to own that the author expected some success from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The attempt to return to a more simple and natural poetry was likely to be welcomed, at a time when the public had become tired of heroic hexameters, with all the buckram and binding that belong to them in modern days. But whatever might have been his expectations the result left them far behind; for among those who smiled on the adventurous minstrel were numbered the great names of William Pitt and Charles Fox. Neither was the extent of the sale inferior to the character of the judges who received the poem with approbation. Upwards of 30,000 copies were disposed of by the trade; and the author had to perform a task difficult to human vanity, when called upon to make the necessary deductions from his own merits, in a calm attempt to account for its popularity."

If we, for our part, attempt to account for its popularity, we cannot do better than take some of Scott's own words, written at a later date, concerning his work as a whole. "I am sensible," he says, "that if there be anything good about my poetry or prose either, it is a hurried frankness of composition, which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active dispositions." It is this 'hurried frankness' that carries Scott's verse along like a company of gallant soldiers marching with easy swinging stride through a fair country, the rhythmical beat of their feet bringing vague suggestions of war and perilous adventure. It is almost impossible to read even the less exciting passages quite calmly and deliber-

ately. There is no poetry so easy to learn by heart, for sound and sense are so welded in that pulsing measure that if we once fairly get the tune started, the words must follow.

The broad, simple outlines of Scott's poetry, its entire freedom from subtlety or obscurity, its free, open-air tone and robust romanticism are among the other qualities that have made it so widely popular.

After the publication of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* Scott's career was simply a triumphal march to fame and wealth. In 1808 *Marmion*,—for which the publishers had paid £1000 without seeing it—was published, and its success even exceeded that of the *Lay*. In 1810 came *The Lady of the Lake*, and in 1811 *The Vision of Don Roderick*. In 1812 Scott removed from Ashestiel to Abbotsford, an estate on the banks of the Tweed, which, by an enormous expenditure of time, pains and money, he afterward developed into the magnificent country seat that he hoped would be the inheritance of a long line of descendants. In December of the same year came *Rokeby*, followed early in 1813 by *The Bridal of Triermain*.

Scott's popularity, witnessed by the sale of his poems, now began to show some signs of waning. Byron's *Childe Harold* (1812) was occupying the attention of the reading public, and partly for this reason, partly because he felt the need of a new method of expression, Scott turned his attention to novel-writing. *Waverley; or, 'tis Sixty Years Since*, was published anonymously in February 1814. Scott's own account of the origin and progress of this work is the best that can be given. "It was a very old attempt of mine," he wrote to a friend, Mr. Morritt, "to attempt to embody some traits of those characters and manners peculiar to Scotland, the last remnants of which vanished during my own youth, so that few or no traces now remain. I had written great part of the first volume, and sketched other passages, when I mislaid the MS., and only found it by the merest accident as I was rummaging the drawers of an old cabinet; and I took the fancy of finishing it, which I did so fast that the last two volumes were written in three weeks. I had a great deal of fun in the accomplish-

ment of this task, though I do not expect that it will be popular in the south, as much of the humour, if there be any, is local, and some of it even professional. You, however, who are an adopted Scotchman, will find some amusement in it. It has made a very strong impression here, and the good people of Edinburgh are busied in tracing the author, and in finding out originals for the portraits it contains. In the first case they will probably find it difficult to convict the guilty author, although he is far from escaping suspicion. Jeffrey has offered to make oath that it is mine, and another critic has tendered his affidavit *ex contrario ;* so that these authorities have divided the Gude Town. However, the thing has succeeded very well, and is thought highly of. I don't know if it has got to London yet. I intend to maintain my incognito."

The date of the early sketch referred to in this letter is 1805, and the story of *Waverley*, as may be gathered from its sub-title, deals with the Jacobite rising of 1745. The book had an instant and wonderful success, and inaugurated a second series of triumphs for Scott.

It is impossible here to do more than name the series of novels which followed *Waverley* with such marvellous rapidity. In 1815 *Guy Mannering* was published, almost simultaneously with a long poem, *Lord of the Isles*. In 1816 came *The Antiquary*, *Old Mortality* and the *Black Dwarf ;* in 1817 *Rob Roy ;* in 1818 *The Heart of Midlothian*. *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *The Legend of Montrose*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, *Kenilworth*, *The Pirate*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *Peveril of the Peak*, *Quentin Durward*, *St. Ronan's Well*, *Redgauntlet*, *The Talisman*, and *The Betrothed* all came by 1825, which year saw Scott at the height of his prosperity. In 1820 a baronetcy had been bestowed upon him. The secret of the authorship of *The Waverley Novels* was by this time a secret no longer, though Scott's friends still joked with him about the *Great Unknown*. The house he had built at Abbotsford was finished, and furnished with so many rare and curious things that it was almost like a museum. Successive purchases

of land had made Scott the owner of a large estate, and this he had planted and improved with the utmost care. His hospitality was lavish, and his charities immense. He had won large sums of money so easily that he seemed to own a Fortunatus' purse, which could never fail. He had not given up the profession of the law, and now held offices which brought him in about £1500 a year, independent of his income from literature. But notwithstanding the great sums he had received, money difficulties, which had been pressing more or less heavily upon him for some years, brought him in January 1826 to disaster. He had associated himself with the publishing firm of Ballantyne, and when this firm, partly through mismanagement, partly through trade depression, failed, he found himself liable for about £130,000.

He met misfortune magnificently. He refused to become bankrupt, and at fifty-four years of age set to work to achieve what seemed an impossibility—the payment of this huge debt. Amid domestic affliction—for Lady Scott was lying near to death,—he began his task. In two months he produced *Woodstock*, one of the finest of his works, and this brought in £8000. In April Lady Scott died; yet he worked on, undaunted. In 1827 appeared his great *Life of Napoleon* and the first series of his *Tales of a Grandfather*. These enabled him to pay his creditors a dividend of six shillings in the pound. In two years he had earned £40,000. He went on with unabated energy, and in 1828 produced his *Fair Maid of Perth*, and began to prepare, and write prefaces for, a collected edition of his works. In 1829 came *Anne of Geierstein*. By this time his health was giving way under the strain of hard and continuous work and many sorrows. Early in 1830 he suffered from a slight paralytic seizure, but immediately on his recovery he began a new novel, *Count Robert of Paris*. Apoplectic attacks at the end of 1830 and the beginning of 1831 brought him to a pitiable condition of health, but he would not give up his work though his brain power was seriously affected, and the new book, *Castle Dangerous*, which he persisted in putting in hand, has little of his old charm. Toward

the end of 1831 the Government offered him a frigate for a voyage to Italy, and his friends, with a last hope that complete rest and change might even then restore him, persuaded him to undertake the voyage. But his health did not improve, and he grew restless away from his native country. In July 1832 he returned home to Abbotsford, and there on September 17 he died

CHAPTER XLVI

THE ESSAYS OF ELIA

THE *Essays of Elia* appeared between August 1820 and August 1825 in *The London Magazine*,—a monthly newspaper to which, at some time during the five years of its existence, Keats, Hazlitt, Carlyle and De Quincey, as well as Charles Lamb, were contributors. Lamb, in 1820, was forty-five years old, and the author of various published works. But it was in *The Essays of Elia* that he found the literary form best suited to his unique powers; it is through them that he has gained his place among the great English prose writers. It is in them, also, that he has told the story of a life, poor and mean in its outward circumstances but so darkened by tragedy and illumined by genius that it can never be commonplace. Many subjects are dealt with in the essays, but there are few of them which are not to some extent autobiographical. We will let Elia tell the story of Charles Lamb, for no one else can tell it half so well.

"I was born," he says, "and passed the first seven years of my life in the Temple. Its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountain, its river, I had almost said,—for in those young years what was this king of rivers but a stream that watered our pleasant places? these are of my oldest recollections." Lamb's father was a confidential servant or clerk of Samuel Salt, one of the Benchers of the Temple. His son describes him under the name of Lovel. "I knew this Lovel," he says. "He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and 'would strike.' In the cause of the oppressed he never considered inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents."

The home in the Temple was a very humble one. "Snug firesides—the low-built roof—parlours ten feet by ten—frugal boards and all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in." But the boy was not without experience of a home of more magnificent sort. His grandmother was housekeeper at the old mansion of the Plumer family, at Blakesware in Hertfordshire, and, when the owners were absent, Charles Lamb with his elder brother and sister often paid her long visits. All the grandeur and beauty of the dwelling he felt to be his own. Many a time, he tells us, he has gone over the gallery of old portraits giving them his own family name, at which they would "seem to smile, reaching forward from the canvas to recognize the new relationship."

"Mine too, was thy noble Marble Hall with its Mosaic pavements and its Twelve Cæsars—stately busts in marble—ranged round. . . . Mine, too—whose else? thy costly fruit garden, with its sun-baked southern wall; the ampler pleasure garden rising backwards from the house in triple terraces, . . . the verdant quarters backwarder still; and, stretching still beyond in old formality, the firry wilderness, the haunt of the squirrel, and the day-long murmuring wood-pigeon."

The imaginative gift by means of which the poor clerk's son entered upon so rich a heritage, opened to him also the regions of torment. "I was dreadfully alive," he tells us, "to nervous terrors. . . . I never laid my head on my pillow, I suppose, from the fourth to the seventh or eighth year of my life—so far as memory serves in things so long ago—without an assurance, which realized its own prophecy, of seeing some frightful spectre."

When Charles Lamb was seven years old, his father's employer, Samuel Salt, obtained for him a presentation to the famous school of Christ's Hospital. In the same year Coleridge came up from Ottery St. Mary. The gentle, nervous little London lad, with his stammering tongue, and his keen, observant eyes was attracted at once by the wonderful qualities of his precocious schoolfellow. "Come back into memory," cries

Elia, "like as thou wert in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee—the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge—Logician, Metaphysician, Bard." The two boys, both so different from the others round them, formed a friendship which lasted for more than fifty years, and was one of the happiest influences in the lives of each. Coleridge has told of the old boyish days in his *Biographia Literaria* and Lamb in his essay on *Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago*. He speaks here as in the person of Coleridge. "I remember L. at school, and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages which I and others of his school-fellows had not. His friends lived in town, and were near at hand; and he had the privilege of going to see them, almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction, which was denied to us. . . . He had his hot plate of roast veal, or the more tempting griskin (exotics unknown to our palates), cooked in the paternal kitchen (a great thing), and brought him daily by his maid or aunt! I remember the good old relative (in whom love forbade pride) squatting down upon some odd stone in a by-nook of the cloisters, disclosing the viands (of higher regale than those cates which the ravens ministered to the Tishbite); and the contending passions of L. at the unfolding. There was love for the bringer; shame for the thing brought, and the manner of its bringing; sympathy for those who were too many to share in it; and, at top of all, hunger (eldest, strongest of the passions!) predominant, breaking down the stony fences of shame, and awkwardness, and a troubling over-consciousness."

At Christ's Hospital Lamb received a thorough classical education. He was never a good Greek scholar, but attained to very considerable proficiency in Latin, which he wrote with great ease. His school-days were probably the happiest of his life, and when the time came for him to leave Christ's Hospital we can imagine how sorrowfully he parted from the friends and the places endeared to him by seven years of close association. Coleridge was going to Jesus College, Cambridge, but for Charles Lamb no such extension of the

student's life was possible. He was, as Elia wrote afterward in his essay on *Oxford in the Vacation*, "defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution" by the poverty of his family. His father was growing old and infirm; his elder brother John had obtained a responsible position in a South Sea House, had left home and did little to help his family. His sister Mary, then about twenty-four years old, looked after the three old people—father, mother, and the Aunt Hetty whose visits to Lamb in his school-days have been recorded—and tried, by working with her needle, to add something to the scanty family income. It was necessary that Charles also should help, and soon after he left school he obtained, as his brother had done, a post in the South Sea House. He stayed there only a short time. In 1792, through the influence of Samuel Salt, he was promoted to the accountant's office of the East India Company at a salary of £70 a year. From this time forward he became the chief support of his family. His father, in the same year, was obliged through increasing age and infirmity to give up the few duties in the service of Samuel Salt, which he had hitherto retained, and retired on a small annuity. The family removed from the Temple to rooms in Little Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. There began for Charles Lamb the life of monotonous drudgery and heavy care which was to last for so many years. It was varied only by occasional meetings with Coleridge, and by holiday visits to Hertfordshire. At Hertfordshire Lamb fell in love with a 'fair-haired maid' of whom we know little except what he tells us in two sonnets written between 1792 and 1796, and in his beautiful essay, *Dream Children*, written many years later. There he describes how the two shadowy little ones stood at his knee while he told them "how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever," he "courted the fair Alice W——n"; and how the dream died, and the children who for a time had seemed his own faded away, their mournful, receding features strangely impressing upon him the effects of speech. "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all.

Charles Lamb

. . . We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence and a name."

The "might have been" was never to be for Charles Lamb. An obstacle more insurmountable even than poverty and much more terrible, stood between him and thoughts of love or marriage. In the early part of the year 1796 he wrote to Coleridge: "My life has been somewhat diversified of late. The six weeks that finished last year and began this, your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a madhouse at Hoxton. . . . Coleridge, it may convince you of my regard for you when I tell you my head ran on you in my madness, as much almost as on another person, who I am inclined to think was the more immediate cause of my temporary frenzy." The "other person" was, doubtless, Alice W——n; and so ended the romance of Lamb's life. Its great tragedy was soon to follow. Insanity, it appears, was hereditary in the family, and it attacked next the kind elder sister, the sensible, quiet patient and hardworking Mary Lamb. She had been to Charles almost as a mother, and he loved and leant upon her as on one stronger and wiser than himself. We can judge in what agony of spirit he wrote, in September 1796, the letter to Coleridge telling how the blow had fallen.

"My Dearest Friend,

"White or some of my friends, or the public papers by this time, may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. My poor, dear, dearest sister, in a fit of insanity, has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse, from whence I fear she must be moved to a hospital. God has preserved to me my senses—I eat, and drink, and sleep, and have my judgment, I believe, very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris, of the Bluecoat School, has been very kind to us, and we have no other friend; but, thank God, I am very

calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write as religious a letter as possible, but no mention of what is gone and done with. With me the 'former things are passed away,' and I have something more to do than feel.

"God Almighty have us well in His keeping.

"C. LAMB."

The young man of twenty-two, himself conscious of an infirmity which might at any time reduce him to the condition of his unfortunate sister, acted at this terrible crisis with the greatest calmness and judgment. The care of the whole family fell upon him; and he took up the burden quietly and bravely. Mary, he resolved, should have everything that he could give her. "We have, Daddy and I, for our two selves and an old maid-servant to look after him when I am out, which will be necessary, £170 or £180 rather a year, out of which we can spare £50 or £60 for Mary while she stays at Islington, where she must and shall stay during her father's life, for his and her comfort. . . . If my father, an old servant-maid, and I can't live, and live comfortably, on £130 or £140 a year, we ought to burn by slow fires; and I almost would, that Mary might not go into an hospital."

It was not long, however, that this state of things continued. A few months passed and the poor old father was dead, and Aunt Hetty soon followed him. Charles was free now to devote himself to his sister, and he did it with entire singleness of heart. She had by this time recovered from her attack, and her brother at once set about making arrangements for her to be confided to his care. Upon certain conditions and undertakings this was done; and the brother and sister went home together to begin the life of mutual love and watchfulness which lasted for thirty-five years. Mary Lamb's attacks of insanity recurred more and more frequently as the years went on, but fortunately she always felt warning symptoms that told her when the time had come for a return to the asylum at Hoxton. A friend has related how he once met the two walking hand-in-hand on this sad errand, the faithful brother

leading the weeping but willing sister to her temporary imprisonment.

On this great tragedy of Charles Lamb's life "Elia" is silent. Only indirectly in the sad notes that are struck even in his tenderest and most delightfully humorous passages can some echo of it be heard. But of the sister, so loved and so pitied, and of the life the two led together, the essays tell us much. Mary appears as Elia's cousin, Bridget. "Bridget Elia," says one of the essays, "has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness; with such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. . . . Her education in youth was not much attended to; and she happily missed all that train of female garniture which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion I know not whether their chance in wedlock might not be diminished by it, but I can answer for it that it makes (if the worst come to the worst) most incomparable old maids."

The "spacious closet of good old English reading" was probably the library of Samuel Salt, and here Lamb himself had "browsed at will" during his childhood. Here he had learnt to know and love those old Elizabethan writers whose works had gone so completely out of fashion during the eighteenth century, and whom he re-introduced to the English reading public by means of his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakespeare* (1808).

The brother and sister made various efforts to increase their very scanty income by means of literary work. For about three years Lamb contributed facetious paragraphs to the morning papers, at the rate of sixpence a joke. "O those

headaches at dawn of day, when at five, or half-past five in summer, and not much later in the dark seasons, we were compelled to rise, having been perhaps not above four hours in bed—for we were no go-to-beds with the lamb, though we anticipated the lark ofttimes in her rising. . . . No Egyptian taskmaster ever devised a slavery like to that, our slavery. . . . Half a dozen jests in a day (bating Sundays too), why it seems nothing! We make twice the number every day in our lives as a matter of course, and claim no Sabbatical exemptions. But then they come into our head. But when the head has to go out to them—when the mountain must go to Mahomet—Reader, try it for once, only for one short twelvemonth."

Lamb published also some poems (1796) and a story, *Rosamund Gray* (1798), neither of which brought him any substantial money return. In 1802 appeared his poetic drama *John Woodvil*, which was very harshly handled by *The Edinburgh Review;* in 1805 he wrote a farce *Mr. H.*, which he himself joined in hissing off the stage. His first success was gained with the *Tales from Shakespeare*, 1807, the joint work of himself and his sister; his second with the *Specimens* of 1808. In 1820 came his crowning triumph with the first of the *Essays of Elia*. All this work was done in the scanty leisure that his duties at the East India House allowed him; and even these hours were not entirely at his own disposal. They were taken up, he complains, by intrusive acquaintances. "I am never C. L. but always C. L. and Co. He who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the more prodigious monstrosity of never being by myself."

For the annoyance caused by this too constant stream of visitors Lamb was himself very largely to blame. He was naturally of a sociable and convivial temperament, and his gentle nature found it difficult to snub or repulse even the most tiresome acquaintance. The monotony of his life, the constant strain involved in his watchful care of his sister, the agony and loneliness that attended her frequent absences at the asylum—all drove him to find relief and distraction in the means nearest at hand. He had many friends whom he truly loved and

honoured. His friendship with Coleridge remained unbroken; Wordsworth, Southey, Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, were among others who were often to be found at his poor lodgings on those famous 'Wednesday evenings' when the Lambs kept open house. But there came also a crowd of less worthy associates in whose company Charles sometimes fell from that better self that we all know and love. The evenings ended, as his patient sister often had to confess, in Charles being "very smoky and drinky." The temptation to take more wine than was good for him was a very strong one, for wine unloosed his stammering tongue from its bonds and made him able to talk freely, eloquently, gloriously. But all his lapses were followed by deep penitence, and Mary, the kind mother-sister, never lost patience or hope. As Charles watched over her, so she watched over him, comforted and encouraged him, calmed his excitable, sensitive nature by her quiet good sense, and kept him, as far as was possible, true to the inspiration of his genius.

As the years went on the circumstances of the brother and sister improved. By 1823 Lamb's salary had risen to about £700 a year, and his gains from literature were also considerable. Though generous in the extreme, neither Charles nor his sister was reckless. Even in the days of their greatest poverty they had kept out of debt. Now they began to enjoy some of the pleasures that come with easy circumstances. In August 1823 they took a house at Islington which, although it was then a country district, was yet near enough to Charles's beloved London to enable him often to visit the scenes so dear to his heart. "Enchanting London," he had written years before to his friend Manning, "whose dirtiest, drab-frequented alley, and her lowest bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn . . . All the streets and pavements are pure gold, I warrant you. At least, I know an alchemy that turns her mud into that metal—a mind that loves to be at home in crowds."

In April 1825 came Lamb's emancipation from the drudgery of the East India Office. The directors marked their apprecia-

tion of his long and faithful service, as well as of his literary reputation, by offering him an immediate retiring allowance of two-thirds of his salary—" a magnificent offer," says Lamb. " I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. . . . For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity ; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about thinking I was happy, and knowing I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. . . . Now that those giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. . . ."

The years that followed were calm, though clouded, and there is little to tell about them except with regard to changes of residence, loss of friends, and the steady increase of Mary Lamb's infirmity. " Mary is ill again," he wrote to Wordsworth in 1833, from Bay Cottage, Edmonton, where he was then living. " Her illnesses encroach yearly. The last was three months, followed by two of depression most dreadful. I look back upon her earlier attacks with longing. Nice little durations of six weeks or so, followed by complete restoration, shocking as they were to me then. In short, half her life is dead to me, and the other half is made anxious with fears, and lookings forward to the next shock."

A few fugitive papers are all that remain to mark this last ten years of Lamb's life. His period of literary activity was over. He occupied his time in reading, in walking, and in visiting such old friends as remained to him. His frail form had grown thinner than ever, his " almost immaterial legs," as Hood had called them, had dwindled to even greater attenuation. But the noble head with its dark hair and broad open brow still redeemed his appearance from insignificance, and his brown eyes were as soft and bright as they had been in his

boyhood's days. The smile, sad, tender and sweet, of which his friends have loved to tell us, still came and went, and the gentle air of patient endurance which the sorrows of his life had brought to him was still sometimes lightened by the flash of merry humour or kindly raillery. His heart was constant to its old friendships. The death of Coleridge in July 1834 gave him a blow from which he could not recover. For many years the genius of Coleridge had been under a cloud. The fatal instability of his character joined to the long-indulged habit of opium taking, had wrecked his marvellous powers. But to Charles Lamb he was still the Coleridge of *The Ancient Mariner* and of *Christabel.* " His great and dear spirit still haunts me. I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men or books without an ineffectual turning and reference to him. He was the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations."

Before five months had passed Lamb had gone to join his friend. On a cold December afternoon, as he was taking his lonely walk along the London road, thinking sadly of Coleridge dead, and Mary away in the asylum, he slipped and fell, slightly wounding his face Erysipelas set in, and on December 29, 1834, he died.

The Victorian Age

THE Victorian age is a great age in English literature. It saw the novel developed into a work of finished literary art; it gave us at least two great poets; it extended the miscellaneous writings which had been begun by the essayists of the previous age, until this became a really valuable department. Toward the end of the century there is a falling off in the quality and quantity of notable works, and it becomes evident that a new era in literary history is at hand. The beginnings of this it has not been here attempted to trace. We close our story with the close of the Victorian age.

CHAPTER XLVII

VANITY FAIR

WHEN Queen Victoria came to the throne a new era in prose fiction was opening. Thackeray, a young man of twenty-six, was writing his first story, *The Great Hoggarty Diamond ;* Dickens, a few months younger, was already known as the author of *Pickwick*, which was running its triumphal course in a series of monthly numbers ; Charlotte Brontë, just turned twenty-one, was toiling wearily as a governess, not without thoughts of authorship ; George Eliot, a girl of seventeen, was looking after her father's house at Arbury in Warwickshire ; George Meredith was a boy of nine years. These are the giants among the great company of Victorian novelists. Within the space of forty years after the Queen's accession were produced all those masterpieces of prose fiction that have made the age famous : and the same period witnessed the publication of the finest works of Tennyson and Browning, of Macaulay's *History*, of the *Cromwell* and *Frederick the Great* of Carlyle, and the *Modern Painters* of Ruskin.

William Makepeace Thackeray, the eldest of the band of novelists, was born in 1811. He belonged to a family that for several generations had been connected with Indian trade. He was born in Calcutta, and when he was six years old was sent home to England. At eleven he entered the Charterhouse School, which is the 'Slaughterhouse' and 'Grey Friars' of several of his novels. Here he did not greatly distinguish himself. Like the hero of *Pendennis* he was "averse to the Greek Grammar from his earliest youth, and would have none of it except at the last extremity." "He never read to improve himself out of school hours, but, on the contrary,

devoured all the novels, plays and poetry on which he could lay his hands. . . . He had a natural taste for reading every possible kind of book which did not fall into his school-course. It was only when they forced his head into the waters of knowledge that he refused to drink."

This natural taste for reading remained with Thackeray all his life long. When he went up to Cambridge in 1829 he was brought into sympathy with the famous little group of students to which Tennyson and Edward Fitzgerald belonged and with several members of this group he formed life-long friendships. When he left college in 1830 he spent some time abroad, chiefly at Paris and Weimar. At Paris he studied drawing, with the idea of becoming an artist. From his childhood he had used his pencil with ease and skill, and his caricatures had been the delight of his schoolfellows at the Charterhouse. The examples of his drawings that remain to us show that he had a rare talent for giving life and animation to the figures in his sketches, that he could catch an expression and illustrate an incident with great aptness. But he never learnt to draw correctly—perhaps because he never really worked hard enough. It is strange that he should have been so entirely mistaken at this period of his life as to the true nature of his talents.

In 1832 he came into possession of the considerable fortune left to him by his father, who had died in 1816. This he soon contrived to get rid of. He had formed expensive habits, he was generous to an extreme degree, and neither at this time nor at any later period of his life, possessed what may be called the financial faculty. He lost large sums in an attempt to start a daily newspaper, and by 1833 it became necessary for him to set to work in earnest to gain a living. Still with the idea of becoming an artist, he took up again his studies in Paris. In 1836 when in consequence of the death of the original artist the publishers of *Pickwick* were in immediate need of an illustrator for the remaining numbers of the work, Thackeray was among the applicants for the vacant post. He submitted drawings, which, as he said humorously in after

W. M. Thackeray 472
From a Photograph

life, "you will be surprised to hear Mr. Dickens did not consider suitable for his purpose." The stress of his necessitous circumstances drove him at length to literature. He became Paris correspondent to a paper called *The Constitutional*, and so gradually drifted into journalistic work. In 1836 he married, but in less than four years his wife became lost to him through the most terrible of misfortunes. An illness caused by a lesion of the brain so far destroyed her mental powers, that it became at last evident, even to her husband, that there was no hope of recovery, and that separation must take place. Thackeray was left alone, save for his three baby girls. His home was full of sad memories, and it was at this time that he formed the habit of living largely at his clubs, a habit which remained with him to the end of his life.

Through all his misfortunes he kept a brave face, and was even considered by some of his friends to show an unbecoming callousness. He worked hard at journalism and wrote for *Fraser's Magazine* the now famous *Yellowplush Papers*. In 1837 and 1838 his *Great Hoggarty Diamond* appeared in monthly instalments, but it was coldly received by the public. About 1841 he first became connected with *Punch*, for which he wrote many delightful papers and poems. *The Snob Papers*, *Novels by Eminent Hands*, *The Ballads of Policeman X*, are among his contributions. In 1844–46 came the tale, perfect in its kind, of *Barry Lyndon*, and in 1845–46 *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*.

But in all these efforts Thackeray failed somehow to hit the public taste. He was known to his brother journalists and to literary men in general, and was respected as a man of brilliant and versatile talents. But the great British public that was, throughout these years, acclaiming each novel of Dickens as it issued from the press with the loudest of praises, and buying thousands of copies, knew little of Thackeray. This was, in part, his own fault. He was constitutionally indolent, and the sustained effort necessary for the production of a really long and serious work was very distasteful to him. He preferred the short papers and ballads that gave him little trouble,

but which gave him also only a passing reputation, and a return in money sufficient only to the needs of the day. He scattered the treasures of his imagination and his wit with a lavish hand in fugitive papers contributed to various magazines, in impromptu verses written for his friends, in brilliant talk at his club. Anthony Trollope tells us that when he began to write a life of Thackeray he asked a number of those who had known the great writer if they could give him any particulars concerning his career at this period. From all he received the same type of answer, "If I could only tell you the impromptu lines that fell from him!" "If I had only kept the drawings from his pen, which used to be chucked about as though they were worth nothing!" "If I could only remember the drolleries!" In general society Thackeray did not shine, but with a few intimate friends he was the most delightful of companions.

But underneath all this outward glitter there was, in Thackeray's nature, a deep vein of melancholy. The buoyant hopefulness of Charles Dickens was as foreign to him as was the indomitable perseverance which was carrying his friend and rival so far ahead in the race for fame. Life seemed to him to be full of hardship and of pain; and since whining over these did not become a man, the only thing to do was to cover up one's wounds with a jest, and turn for consolation to those passing joys that were all the world could offer. It is this attitude toward life that has sometimes caused Thackeray to be regarded as a cynic, but no cynic ever had a heart as large and tender as was his. Only it seemed to him useless to attempt to represent things as better than they really were. Much of the literature of the day he thought poor and futile because the writers had painted men as it was pleasant to imagine them to be rather than as they were. The heroes of fiction, even of Dickens's fiction, he considered as mere concessions to popular taste. "Since the author of *Tom Jones* was buried," he wrote in one of his later books, "no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN. We must drape him, and give him a certain

conventional simper." This Thackeray resolved that he himself would not do. "I can't help telling the truth," he says, "as I view it, and describing what I see. To describe it otherwise than it seems to me would be falsehood in that calling in which it has pleased Heaven to place me; treason to that conscience which says that men are weak; that truth must be told; that faults must be owned; that pardon must be prayed for; and that Love reigns supreme over all."

It was in this spirit that Thackeray early in 1846 began to write the work that was to make him famous. During part of 1846, the whole of 1847 and the first half of 1848 novel readers in England had two great treats to look forward to in each month. There was the instalment of *Dombey and Son*, in the green wrapper then so familiar to readers of Dickens's works, and there was the new novel, *Vanity Fair*, which, with the name of William Makepeace Thackeray on its canary-coloured cover, was making the name of Becky Sharp a household word. It was to Becky Sharp that the great popularity of the book was mainly due. Thackeray called it "a novel without a hero," and it is certain that the three characters who might have aspired to fill the hero's place, George Osborne, Major Dobbin, and Rawdon Crawley, are completely overshadowed by this amazing heroine. She is a heroine of an entirely new type, neither beautiful nor good nor clever, except with that kind of cleverness that tends to worldly advancement. Thackeray shows us exactly how little she is, and makes us realize with how small a capital she starts out to make her fortune. The way in which she does it has all the excitement that attaches to the achievement of the apparently impossible. Amelia, the rival heroine, has generally been described by critics as a model of insipidity, but this is scarcely fair. By the side of Becky she seems commonplace, but she is in reality a sweet and natural girl, such a one, Mr. Trollope says, as any father might wish his daughter to be.

The first numbers of *Vanity Fair* attracted public attention, and as the story went on its fame gathered. It was the first of all Thackeray's works which he had signed with his own

name. Hitherto he had been Mr. C. James Yellowplush, or Michael Angelo Titmarsh, or Fitzboodle or Ikey Solomon. Now the world began to know William Makepeace Thackeray. He was sought after by fashionable society, and extolled in the newspapers. Strangers, when they met at some great dinner-party or other social function a tall, rather portly man of noble presence, with a fine, open forehead, flowing hair that was rapidly turning grey, and a broken nose, recognized him at once as the new literary lion. The broken nose was a memento of an occasion, famous in the annals of the Charterhouse, when two small boys of eleven, William Makepeace Thackeray and George Stovin Venables settled their little differences after the manner approved of boys, before a large and delighted assembly of their schoolfellows. But the injury he there received rather added to than took away from the distinction of Thackeray's appearance in his later years. It certainly did not prevent his becoming a hero to many of those who read his books, and the worship tendered by these admirers sometimes, we are told, caused him serious embarrassment. Charlotte Brontë in her remote Yorkshire home read *Vanity Fair* and appreciated it after her intense and serious fashion. Her own book, *Jane Eyre,* had been published in October 1847, and in the second edition, 1848, she inserted a dedication to Thackeray. She looked upon him, she said, "as the social regenerator of his day—as the very master of that working corps who would restore to rectitude the warped state of things." "His wit is bright," she continued, "his humour attractive, but both bear the same relation to his serious genius, that the mere lambent sheet-lightning, playing under the edge of the summer cloud, does to the electric death-spark hid in its womb."

The success of *Vanity Fair* gave to Thackeray just the stimulus he required. His lack of self-confidence had prevented him from working freely and easily, but now he set to work in a more buoyant spirit. His next novel, *Pendennis* (1848–50), which is to some extent autobiographical, shows this clearly, especially in its opening chapters. In 1852 came

Esmond, usually considered to be his masterpiece, and in 1854 *The Newcomes*, memorable for that character whom every reader of Thackeray loves, dear old Colonel Thomas Newcome.

This was the happiest period of Thackeray's life. His daughters had grown old enough to be his companions, and he loved them tenderly and delighted in their society. Home became something like home once more, though he still continued to frequent the clubs to which he had grown accustomed, and of which he was such an honoured member. The consciousness that he could make an adequate provision for his daughters lightened the burden of care which in the old hand-to-mouth days had lain so heavily upon him. Thackeray never grew rich. He was too careless of money and too lavishly generous for that. But he reached a position which raised him above the constant fret that comes from means insufficient for daily needs. He never became industrious. The printer was sometimes waiting for an instalment of his book when that instalment was scarcely begun. But until ill-health was added to constitutional indolence he managed to keep abreast of his work without too obvious a strain. In 1851 he made his first appearance as a lecturer, and delivered a course of lectures upon *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*, which had an immense success. Other courses, given at home and in America, followed, and brought in large sums of money. In 1857 he began *The Virginians*, a continuation of *Esmond*, whose monthly numbers ran until October 1859. In the following year he became editor of *The Cornhill Magazine*. This, from the financial point of view, was Thackeray's most successful undertaking. The sale of the magazine was almost unprecedented, and its editor's jubilant letters show how keenly he enjoyed the triumph. He contributed to it his *Lovel the Widower*, *Philip*, and the delightful *Roundabout Papers*. With the money that the paper brought him he built for himself a grand new house at Palace Green, Kensington, where he entertained both the world of fashion and the world of literature. But his infirmities were growing upon him, and the attacks of spasms to which he had for years

been subject came with alarming frequency. On Christmas Eve 1863 his servant carried to his bedside his morning cup of chocolate, and found him lying dead. "Others may walk down to the pier with us," he had said in a letter to a friend, "but we must make the voyage alone." He had made his voyage now, and his great spirit was at rest on the farther shore.

Thackeray was buried at Kensal Green, and a bust to his memory was placed in Westminster Abbey. Many tributes, in verse and prose, appeared in the periodicals of the day. Dickens wrote in *All the Year Round*, and Lord Houghton in the *Cornhill*. But the truest and tenderest tribute came from his old friend *Punch*, in the form of a poem written by Mr. Tom Taylor. This, although it is so well known as to be almost hackneyed, can scarcely be quoted too often, and we will give it here

He was a cynic! By his life all wrought
  Of generous acts, mild words, and gentle ways;
His heart wide open to all kindly thought,
  His hand so quick to give, his tongue to praise

He was a cynic! You might read it writ
  In that broad brow, crowned with its silver hair;
In those blue eyes, with childlike candour lit,
  In that sweet smile his lips were wont to wear!

He was a cynic! By the love that clung
  About him from his children, friends, and kin;
By the sharp pain light pen and gossip tongue
  Wrought in him, chafing the soft heart within.

CHAPTER XLVIII

DAVID COPPERFIELD

IT will be easily believed," wrote Charles Dickens, "that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can ever love that family as dearly as I love them. But, like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child—and his name is David Copperfield." Most of Dickens's readers share his partiality for this favourite child. It is neither his eldest nor his youngest born, but belongs to that middle period which saw the fullness of his powers. When he began to write it he was thirty-seven years old, and the idol of the English reading public. Already he had produced seven out of the fifteen novels that were to form his main contribution to English literature. *Pickwick Papers* had begun to appear in 1836, and Dickens had followed up this first success with *Oliver Twist* (1838), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840), *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843), *Dombey and Son* (1848). Novel had followed novel in this wonderful series each so full of characters, incidents and details, each so abounding in life and high spirits that it seemed as if the entire energies and accumulated observation of the writer must have been expended on one work alone. It was a marvellous achievement, and the man who had so triumphantly accomplished it might well have thought that the time for rest had come. But Dickens's store of energy seemed inexhaustible. No sooner was *Dombey and Son* finished than he plunged into new enterprises. His enthusiasm for the stage was almost as great as his enthusiasm for literature, and from 1847 to 1852 he stage-managed an amateur theatrical company which gave performances in

Manchester, Liverpool and London, had the honour of performing before Queen Victoria, and gathered in large sums for various charities. He was, moreover, becoming famous as a public speaker, and charitable and educational institutions were eager to secure him for their meetings. To such calls his active spirit of benevolence and his enthusiasm for reform made him give a willing response. Added to this, he founded in 1849 a new periodical, *Household Words*, of which he became the very efficient editor, and to which he regularly contributed. His circle of friends, meanwhile, was growing larger and larger, and his social life fuller and richer. Thackeray was now one of his intimates, and nobody rejoiced at the success of *Vanity Fair* more heartily than did Charles Dickens. So with fun and laughter, with hard work and hard play, each undertaken with equal zest, the days of these happy years went by; and when the busy day was over there were the midnight tramps through the London streets that soothed the fervid brain even while they provided the material for renewed mental activity.

Amid all these occupations and interests the plan of a new work was gradually forming in Dickens's brain. A question concerning his childhood, put to him in March or April 1847 by his friend John Forster, had sent his thoughts backward toward that early time. A little later he gave to his friend—whom even then he regarded as his future biographer—a paper in which he had written an account of his boyish experiences. The memories thus recalled mingled with the thought of the new novel then floating in his brain, and the result was a story which, in many of its details, especially those connected with the early life of the hero, is autobiographical. Passages from the account given to John Forster appear almost without alteration; and although David Copperfield is not to be identified with Charles Dickens, he may be regarded as reflecting to a very large degree his creator's character, disposition and ambitions.

As was usual with Dickens, he found some difficulty in getting his story fairly started. The choice of a title delayed

him for a long time. Forster gives a list of suggestions sent to him, by which it appears that Dickens was strongly in favour of *Mag's Diversions* as the leading phrase. "Mag" was to stand for David's aunt Margaret, who was a prominent figure in Dickens's earliest conception of the story. The hero's surname also gave some trouble. It arrived at last by way of Trotfield, Trotbury, Copperboy and Copperstone at Copperfield, and Aunt Margaret developed into Betsey Trotwood. The title then took shape as *The Personal History and Experience of David Copperfield the Younger.*

These preliminaries being satisfactorily settled, the story went merrily on. The first number was published in May 1849. Miss Betsey made her appearance in the first chapter, preceding even the hero, but had scarcely established herself as a public favourite before she disappeared. The chapters which tell of David's earliest years have, except in one or two scattered passages, no foundation in actual fact. Charles Dickens was not an orphan, nor did he live at Blunderstone, near Yarmouth. His father, John Dickens, was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, and, at the time of the birth of his eldest son, Charles, was living at Landport, a suburb of Portsea. In 1816 he was moved to Chatham, and there he lived until 1823. The boy's early recollections, therefore, were not of the 'spongy and soppy' flats of Yarmouth—which indeed Dickens never saw until 1849—but of the pleasant hills and bowery lanes of Kent, the picturesque streets of Rochester, the soldiers in their bright uniforms marching and manœuvring on the open spaces down by the River Medway. But he began his education as David Copperfield began his, through the medium of the 'fat black letters in the primer' which his mother taught him at her knee; and, like David, he found comfort for the troubles of his boyhood in a small collection of books belonging to his father, which were stored in a little room upstairs. "From that blessed little room, *Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gil Blas* and *Robinson Crusoe* came out, a glorious host, to keep me company." This

was the most important part of Dickens's early education. What he gained from these books he never lost, and their influence is clearly to be seen in his own literary work.

It is when we approach the Murdstone and Grinby scenes in the life of David Copperfield that the resemblance between his experience and that of Dickens becomes clearly marked. When Charles Dickens was eleven years old, his father removed to London, and the family fell upon evil times. John Dickens was one of those good-natured, incompetent and incorrigibly hopeful persons whom his son has pictured in Mr. Micawber. He was constantly in money difficulties, and these now reached an acute stage. In London the family lived at Bayham Street, Camden Town, then one of the poorest of the suburban districts. To these squalid surroundings the intelligent, sensitive little boy was transplanted. "As I thought," he said, long afterward, "in the little back-garret in Bayham Street, of all I had lost in losing Chatham, what would I have given, if I had had anything to give, to have been sent back to any other school, to have been taught something anywhere!" "I know my father to be as kind-hearted and generous a man as ever lived in the world. . . . But, in the ease of his temper, and the straitness of his means, he appeared to have utterly lost at this time the idea of educating me at all, and to have utterly put from him the notion that I had any claim upon him, in that regard whatever. So I degenerated into cleaning his boots of a morning, and my own; and making myself useful in the work of the little house; and looking after my younger brothers and sisters (we were now six in all); and going on such poor errands as arose out of our poor way of living."

These errands included those pitiful little journeys to the pawnbroker which he has represented David as making on behalf of Mrs. Micawber. Other experiences of the Bayham Street household he has narrated in the same connexion. The great brass plate which covered the centre of the front door at Mrs. Micawber's house in Windsor Terrace bore a legend similar to that which announced "Mrs. Dickens Board-

Charles Dickens 482

ing Establishment for Young Ladies," in Bayham Street. Great hopes had been raised in the boy's breast by the plan of which this brass plate was the symbol; but they came to nothing. "I left," he says, "at a great many other doors, a great many circulars calling attention to the merits of the establishment, yet nobody ever came to the school, nor do I recollect that anybody ever proposed to come, or that the least preparation was made to receive anybody. But I know that we got on very badly with the butcher and baker; that very often we had not too much for dinner; and that at last my father was arrested."

The crisis thus came to John Dickens as it came to Mr. Micawber, and the details of the debtors' prison as given in *David Copperfield* are drawn from life. Drawn from life also is the story of David's experiences at the warehouse of Murdstone and Grinby. When John Dickens was taken to prison, the family had "encamped, with a young servant girl from Chatham workhouse in the two parlours of the emptied house," where the furniture had been seized for rent. To this house came one day a relative of the family who was connected with a blacking warehouse lately established at Hungerford Stairs, Strand. He proposed that the little Charles, then eleven years old, should begin work at the blacking factory at a salary of six shillings a week, and his offer was accepted.

Then began for Charles Dickens a period of deep misery and intense humiliation. "It is wonderful to me," he says, "that even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me—a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally—to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school. Our friends, I take it, were tired out. No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have been more so, if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar-school, and going to Cambridge.

"The blacking warehouse was the last house on the left-

hand side of the way, at old Hungerford Stairs. It was a crazy, tumble-down old house, abutting, of course, on the river, and literally overrun with rats. Its wainscotted rooms, and its rotten floors and staircase, and the old grey rats swarming down in the cellars, and the sound of their squeaking and scuffling coming up the stairs at all times, and the dirt and decay of the place, rise up visibly before me, as if I were there again." Here he was employed in tying up pots of blacking and pasting labels upon them.

"No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I . . . felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be bought back any more; cannot be written."

After a time Mrs. Dickens, with the family, moved into the prison, and then lodgings were taken for Charles in a neighbouring street. Sundays he spent in the prison. The rent of this lodging was paid by his father; for all other necessities the child had to depend upon his poor weekly wage. The shifts and straits of David Copperfield, the scanty dinners, the reckless indulgence in stale pastry, the birthday treat of a glass of the 'Genuine Stunning' ale—all these things belong to the history of Charles Dickens. "I know," he said, in the account that he wrote for his friend, "I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by anyone, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through; by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting-house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount, and labelled with a

different day. I know that I have lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond."

Dickens did not, as David did, run away from the employment that was so hateful to him. His release came in a different fashion. After a time John Dickens made a composition with his creditors and was released from prison. Later, he quarrelled with the relative who had suggested Charles's employment in the blacking factory, and in his anger, removed his son from the employment. "With a relief so strange that it was like oppression," says Charles Dickens, "I went home. . . . From that hour until this at which I write, no word of that part of my childhood which I have now gladly brought to a close, has passed my lips to any human being. I have no idea how long it lasted; whether for a year, or much more, or less. From that hour until this, my father and my mother have been stricken dumb upon it. I have never heard the least allusion to it, however far off and remote, from either of them. I have never, until I now impart it to this paper, in any burst of confidence with anyone, my own wife not excepted, raised the curtain I then dropped, thank God.

"Until old Hungerford Market was pulled down, until old Hungerford Stairs were destroyed, and the very nature of the ground changed, I never had the courage to go back to the place where my servitude began. I never saw it. I could not endure to go near it. For many years, when I came near to Robert Warren's, in the Strand, I crossed over to the opposite side of the way, to avoid a certain smell of the cement they put upon the blacking-corks, which reminded me of what I was once. It was a very long time before I liked to go up Chandos Street. My old way home by the Borough made me cry after my eldest child could speak.

"In my walks at night I have walked there often, since then, and by degrees I have come to write this. It does not seem a tithe of what I might have written, or of what I meant to write."

It was with a thrill of amazement and sympathy that the public first read the words that have been quoted in Forster's *Life of Dickens*, published in 1872. When, however, the story of David Copperfield was appearing month by month throughout the summer of 1849, no one except Forster himself had any idea that the author was relating his own experiences. But when the hero had escaped to the care of his aunt, the delightful Betsey Trotwood, had passed through Dr. Strong's school, and had become an articled clerk to a proctor of Doctors Commons, there were slight resemblances between his career and that of Dickens, which were fairly obvious to his intimate friends. After attending for two years a school in the neighbourhood of his home, Dickens had become a lawyer's clerk. The ambition which even the apparent hopelessness of his earlier circumstances had not been able entirely to stifle, now woke in full power. He endeavoured by regular and careful reading at the British Museum to make up, as far as possible, for his lack of early education. Like David Copperfield, he aspired to become a reporter, and to this end began to learn shorthand, the acquiring of perfect knowledge of which is, he estimates, "about equal in difficulty to the mastery of six languages."

Both Dickens and David Copperfield triumphed over the 'savage stenographic mystery,' however, and became Parliamentary reporters of high standing. The next venture of these two prototypes was a venture in authorship. "I wrote a little something in secret," says David, "and sent it to a magazine, and it was published in the magazine." Dickens tells us how one evening, he dropped "with fear and trembling, a paper addressed to the *Old Monthly Magazine* into a dark letter-box in a dark office up a dark court in Fleet Street"; and he tells of his joy when he saw his contribution in print. "I walked down to Westminster Hall, and turned into it for half an hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride, that they could not bear the street, and were not fit to be seen there."

From this point the careers of David and of Dickens diverge

widely. Both become famous authors, but in no other respect can a likeness be traced. It remains to say a few words about the originals of some of the characters of *David Copperfield;* and first of all, of Dora. Dora is drawn from Dickens's first love. Who she was he does not tell us, but upon the strength of his affection he is almost as eloquent as is David. "I don't quite apprehend," he wrote to Forster, who had ventured to doubt the reality of his youthful passion, "what you mean by my overrating the strength of the feeling of five-and-twenty years ago. If you mean of my own feeling and will only think what the desperate intensity of my nature is, and that this began when I was Charley's (his son's) age; that it excluded every other idea from my mind for four years, at a time of life when four years are equal to four times four; and that I went at it with a determination to overcome all the difficulties, which fairly lifted me up into that newspaper life, and floated me away over a hundred men's heads; then you are wrong, because nothing can exaggerate that. . . . And just as I can never open that book as I open any other book, I cannot see the face (even at four-and-forty) or hear the voice without going wandering away over the ashes of all that youth and hope in the wildest manner." Dickens, it appears, kept up in his later years, the acquaintance of his early love. A month after the letter just quoted was written, he went to call upon her, and records that he saw, with unmoved composure, her favourite dog Jip, stuffed, in the hall. Soon after, he began to write *Little Dorrit*, in which the portrait of Flora is drawn from the same original as that of Dora in his earlier work.

For Mr. Micawber as has already been stated, some hints were obtained from the character of the elder Dickens. Certain peculiarities of speech which had always been a source of amusement to his son, were bestowed upon the great Mr. Micawber, who, moreover, resembled his prototype in chronic impecuniosity and perennial hopefulness. But the portrait is in no sense an unkindly one, and was never resented by John Dickens. In the case of another character of *David Copper-*

field, its author was not equally fortunate. When the number appeared in which Miss Mowcher was first introduced to his readers, he received a letter from a lady of his acquaintance, afflicted in a manner similar to the dwarf of his story, reproaching him with having thus held her up to ridicule. Dickens was full of contrition. He declared that he had had no idea the portrait would be recognized; that several of Miss Mowcher's characteristics—notably her habit of saying, "Ain't I volatile?"—had, in fact, been identified by his friends as belonging to quite another person; that he would do his best to remove the unpleasant impression he had created, and, to this end, would give to Miss Mowcher a role quite different from that which had originally been planned for her. It was in the fulfilment of this promise that the little dwarf was made instrumental in the capture of Littimer.

The Yarmouth group, which, in the opinion of many readers contains the best characters in the book, had, as far as we know, no direct originals. Dickens was always most at home in drawing characters from humble life. His natural sympathy combined with his early experiences, gave him a keen appreciation of the difficulties and temptations of the poor, and of the virtues which, as he has taught us, flourish so freely among them. He knew best and could draw best, the poor of London; but during the summers spent at Broadstairs and at other watering-places, both English and French, he always, in his own pleasant, hearty fashion, made friends with the fisherfolk and boatmen; and he certainly paid these friends of his a high compliment when he introduced to the reading world, as their representatives, Mr. Peggotty and Ham.

The last number of *David Copperfield* appeared in November 1850, and with it Dickens reached the height of his fame. He wrote seven more novels during the twenty years of life that remained to him, but these, except perhaps *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*, show, in comparison to the early works, some failure of inspiration. His life was an uneventful one, of almost unbroken prosperity. Its chief incidents were a second visit to America (1867) for the purpose

of giving a series of public readings from his works in the chief towns of that country, and the continuation of these readings on his return to England. Their popularity, on both sides of the Atlantic was astounding. They brought to Dickens immense sums of money, but the fatigue and excitement incident to them undoubtedly hastened his death.

On March 15, 1870, the farewell reading was given at St. James's Hall. Dickens's health was much broken, but his friends hoped that complete rest would soon restore him to his normal state. He withdrew to the house at Gad's Hill, near Rochester, which he had bought twelve years before—the very house which, since he had been 'a very queer small boy' of nine it had been his ambition to possess. Here, on June 9, he died, quite suddenly, after having been working all the morning at his novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood.*

He was deeply and sincerely mourned by all classes, both in England and America. Men were conscious of a personal loss, of a feeling that some genial, kindly influence had passed out of their lives. The story of the ragged market girl at Covent Garden who, when she was told that Dickens was dead, cried, "Will Christmas die too, then?" is typical of the way in which Dickens was regarded by a large section of the British people. He had done much by his writings to revive the keeping of Christmas as a great national home festival, and he stood in the minds of his fellow-countrymen for all those feelings that are associated with Christmas—goodwill, and mirth, and kindliness and home affection, and the reaching out of hands toward poorer brethren.

In the early morning of June 14, Charles Dickens was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey. The service, in accordance with his own strongly expressed wish, was strictly private, and for the same reason no monument or public memorial has been raised to his memory. "I rest my claim to the remembrance of my country," he had proudly said, "on my published works."

CHAPTER XLIX

JANE EYRE

ON a cold winter's day toward the end of February 1820 the Reverend Patrick Brontë, an Irish clergyman, arrived, to take up his position as rector of the parish of Haworth, in Yorkshire. The village people long remembered how the seven heavily laden carts, which were bringing the new parson's goods from his previous home at Thornton, near Bradford, were dragged slowly up the steep village street toward the turning which led to Haworth parsonage; and they remembered the small, neat, delicate-looking lady who was driven in from the neighbouring town of Keighley a few days afterward. This lady was the parson's wife, and she brought with her six tiny children, the eldest not much more than six years old. They were frail little mites, so quiet and 'old-fashioned,' that, as the homely Yorkshire servants afterward said, you would scarcely know there was a child about the house. In intellect they were almost alarmingly precocious, and we may be quite sure that the two eldest, Maria and Elizabeth, and perhaps even the third, Charlotte, were conscious of the strangeness of their surroundings, and had their own thoughts and anticipations concerning the new life on which they were entering. What did they think, we wonder, of the heavily built grey stone house that stood so bleakly on the hill looking down upon the village; of the little church standing directly opposite; of the graveyard rising behind the church, thickly sown with solid, upright, tombstones; of the moors which rose away and away behind the graveyard, as far as the eye could see, their dark wave-like lines broken only by white patches of snow? In after life the

children grew to love those moors, whose great, bare, lonely stretches had in them something congenial to their own shy, yet wild spirits. From the first the moors were their playground—if such quiet, grave little creatures could ever be said to play. Their old nurse has told how they used to start out, the elder children carefully leading the toddling little ones —Branwell, the only boy of the family, Emily, and baby Anne. A strong affection bound them all together, and Maria, the eldest girl, was like a little mother to the others. Before she was eight years old she was, in truth, the only mother they had, for Mrs. Brontë fell ill soon after she came to Haworth, and died in September 1821. For more than a year the little group of motherless children lived in the lonely parsonage, with such tendance as a rough but kindly Yorkshire servant could give. Their father was occupied with his work, and could spare them little of his time or attention. Toward the end of 1822 Miss Branwell, an elder sister of their mother's, came from her distant Cornish home to look after the household. She looked well to the children's bodily welfare, and brought up her nieces in habits of obedience and punctuality. She taught them to sew, to cook, and to manage household affairs; but their natures were so different from her own that she could do little for their intellectual and spiritual development. They still spent most of their time alone together, in a little room upstairs which was called 'the children's study.' They took a great interest in politics, and Maria read the newspapers of the day and explained their contents to her brother and sisters.

In July 1824 Maria and Elizabeth were sent to a school which had lately been opened at Cowan's Bridge, a tiny village between Leeds and Kendal. It was intended for the daughters of poor clergymen, and the very small fees were supplemented by funds subscribed by the supporters of the school. The domestic department seems to have been badly mismanaged. Charlotte Brontë who, with Emily, joined her sisters at Cowan's Bridge in December, has given a terrible picture of the school in *Jane Eyre*. The food was so badly cooked, and served in

such slovenly fashion, that it was impossible for delicate children like the Brontës—who, moreover, were accustomed in their own home to the most scrupulous cleanliness—to eat it. The harsh rules pressed heavily on gentle, timid natures, and illness was treated as a fault rather than as a misfortune. Under such a system Maria Brontë quickly sank. She was removed from the school in 1825 and died a few weeks afterward. Before the summer came, the next sister, Elizabeth, too was dead. Charlotte and Emily remained at Cowan's Bridge a few months longer, but the authorities, alarmed at their appearance of delicacy, and fearful lest they should follow their sisters, advised that they should not be left to pass another winter in a situation which evidently did not suit their constitutions. In the autumn of 1825 they returned to Haworth.

The diminished group of children—Charlotte the eldest, was now nearly ten years old—took up their old life. Miss Branwell gave them all regular instruction for some hours each morning, and, for the rest, they educated themselves. They read and talked and discussed with their father the public events of the time. They wrote, too—tales, dramas, poems, romances—and Charlotte kept a kind of irregular diary which recorded the books she had read—a remarkable list—the pictures she had seen and those she would like to see, and the 'make believes' with which she and her sisters beguiled the long quiet days. They roamed about on the bleak and lonely moors and learned to love them with a passion which, though it found little outward expression, was nevertheless deep and strong. So they grew out of childhood into youth.

In 1831 Charlotte was again sent to school, this time to a private establishment, situated on the road between Leeds and Huddersfield. The head mistress, Miss Wooler, was a woman of rare qualities and great skill in dealing with young girls, and the two years Charlotte spent there seem to have been as happy as any years could be spent away from the home and the family she loved so dearly. When she first

Charlotte Brontë 492

George Richmond

Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

entered Roe Head, as Miss Wooler's house was called, she was a girl of fifteen, very small in figure, though well formed, with soft thick brown hair, and reddish-brown eyes whose "usual expression was of quiet listening intelligence; but now and then, on some just occasion for vivid interest or wholesome indignation, a light would shine out, as if some spiritual lamp had been kindled, which glowed behind those expressive orbs."

The queer old-fashioned little girl soon rose to the top of the school, and became a great favourite with her schoolfellows. They delighted in the stories which, when the mood was upon her, she would tell to them, and in the strange fancies which made her comments on their everyday surroundings so unique and fascinating. Her health improved with the free and active open-air life that Miss Wooler prescribed for her pupils, and when she returned to Haworth in 1832 she took with her a store of memories concerning the scenery and the life of the district round about Roe Head, which memories she afterward used in *Shirley*.

There followed two quiet years at home, and then Charlotte returned to Roe Head—this time as a teacher. She felt that it was her duty to do something by which she could earn money, now that the calls upon her father for the education of the younger ones, and especially of Branwell, were more than his slender income could well afford. Emily went with her sister, as a pupil, but she pined so for home and for the familiar moors that her health suffered, and after three months she went back to Haworth, and Anne took her place at Roe Head. To all three girls Haworth Parsonage was the one spot on earth which meant home, and about this time they began to scheme how they could manage to earn the money necessary for their support, without leaving the place they loved. Their thoughts naturally turned to authorship, for from their childish days they had been used to writing. During the Christmas holidays of 1836 they held many consultations concerning their future plans. "It was the household custom among these girls," says Mrs. Gaskell, "to sew till nine o'clock at night. At

that hour Miss Branwell generally went to bed, and her nieces' duties for the day were accounted done. They put away their work, and began to pace the room backward and forward, up and down—as often with the candles extinguished, for economy's sake, as not—their figures glancing into the firelight, and out into the shadow, perpetually. At this time, they talked over past cares and troubles; they planned for the future, and consulted each other as to their plans." The outcome of the consultations of this winter was that Charlotte wrote to the poet Southey asking his advice as to taking up a literary career. She received, after a long interval, a reply, kind and sensible, but discouraging the idea. For another eighteen months she continued her work at Roe Head, and Emily took a situation at a school in Halifax; but a breakdown in health obliged each, in the summer of 1838, to return home. Funds, however, were scanty. Branwell had already begun that career of dissipation which was so cruelly to disappoint the high hopes his family had formed for him, and make him for years to come the shame of the simple, upright Haworth household. His extravagance dipped deeply into the family purse, and in 1839 both Anne and Charlotte obtained posts as private governesses. Another plan now began to occupy the minds of the three sisters. Could they not open a small school on their own account at Haworth and so, undivided and in their own home, earn a sufficient living? The idea was eagerly discussed, but with no definite result. Charlotte, whose strong good sense was one of her marked characteristics, soon realized that the education and accomplishments of herself and her sisters were not up to the standard required for really successful schoolmistresses. She resolved to make a determined attempt at self-improvement, and after much discussion, her aunt, Miss Branwell, agreed to advance a sum of money large enough to enable Charlotte and Emily to spend a year at a school in Brussels for the purpose of improving themselves in French, German, music and drawing. In 1842 they left England, and established themselves at Brussels at a school of some reputation, kept by M. and Mme. Héger,

The story of Charlotte's Brussels experiences is told in *Villette*, written ten years later. It will be enough to say that though both girls suffered agonies from loneliness and shyness, they profited greatly by their stay, and were treated, in all respects, with kindness and consideration. In November 1842 they were recalled to England by news of Miss Branwell's serious illness, and before they could start on their journey home came a second letter telling of her death. They reached Haworth just before Christmas, and found that their aunt had left her small property to be divided among her three nieces. Thus provided with a little capital, they revived their plan of opening a school; but it was at length agreed that Charlotte should, first, in accordance with a proposal made by M. Héger, return to the Brussels school for a year as an English teacher. In January 1844 she was home again, and the school plan was seriously discussed. Pupils, however, were hard to find, though friends did their best. As the year went on other circumstances caused the three girls silently, though with much bitterness of heart, to drop their long-cherished scheme. Branwell had returned home, and his habits of dissipation had now reached a stage which made it impossible that young girls should be received under the same roof with him. The years 1844 and 1845 were terrible and dreary years to the three sisters; but they never altogether lost hope or gave up the idea of employing the talents they felt that they possessed to some useful purpose. In the autumn of 1845 Charlotte induced the reserved and silent Emily to consent to add some of her poems to those written by her two sisters, for the purpose of publication. After some difficulty a publisher was found who was willing to produce the book, at the authors' own expense. It appeared in May 1846, with the title of *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell.* These names had been chosen as giving no idea of sex, and as preserving the actual initials of the authors.

The book attracted little notice, though it contained the strange and beautiful poems of Emily Brontë which have since been judged by critics to belong to a very high order

of poetry. The contributions of Charlotte and Anne were less remarkable. A second literary venture of the sisters had no better fortune. Each had written a prose work—Emily the strange story so full of wild untutored genius, *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte, *The Professor*, Anne, *Agnes Grey*. These stories they sent round from publisher to publisher, at first together, then separately ; but still, with depressing regularity, the manuscripts were returned to Haworth Parsonage.

Meanwhile, home worries and troubles, both small and great, harassed the three sisters. The old parsonage servant, Tabby, was now nearly eighty years old, and quite unequal to the work required of her ; but the Brontës would not send away one who had served them long and faithfully, and Tabby clung jealously to her position. Many household duties therefore fell to the lot of the two girls—more especially to Emily and Charlotte, for Anne, the 'little one,' was always more or less weak and ailing, and the other two cherished her with tender, motherly care. Their father was rapidly ageing ; his sight was failing, and it was feared that he would soon be quite blind. Worst of all, there was Branwell, the brother they had so loved and admired, who had given up all attempt now at earning his own living, and was gradually drinking himself to death before the eyes of his old father and his agonized sisters. It is little wonder that their writings at this time bore traces of their terrible experience.

In July 1846 it was decided that Mr. Brontë must be operated upon for cataract, and in August Charlotte and he took lodgings in Manchester for this purpose. The operation was successfully performed, but Mr. Brontë was obliged to remain in Manchester until the end of September, under the care of the oculist. It was at Manchester, in hired lodgings, oppressed by anxious care for her father, and away from the sisters whose sympathy meant so much to her, that Charlotte began to write a new story. The manuscript of *The Professor* had been again returned to her on the very morning of the day fixed for her father's operation ; but she bravely sent it off again, and resolutely set herself to her new work.

In September she came back to Haworth, and for nearly a year she wrote steadily, during all the leisure time she could command, at her story. A great part of her mornings were given to domestic work, and throughout the day would come calls for attention from her father and brother which could not be disregarded. Too frequently, also, came dreadful days and nights, when Branwell kept the whole house in terror by his violence and obstinacy, and when all their efforts scarcely sufficed to keep the shameful skeleton in their cupboard hidden from the public gaze. But there were times of comparative quiet and security; and then Charlotte, when her work was done, would sit down in the quiet parsonage parlour, with a square of stiff cardboard, some small sheets of paper and a pencil. With the board held up close to her short-sighted eyes, she would cover sheet after sheet of paper with her fine minute handwriting, pausing long sometimes to find the exact word to express her thought, but seldom altering what was once written down. As the room grew dark she would sit writing in the firelight; then, after giving her father his tea, she would write or sew with her sisters until nine o'clock. Then, in accordance with the old custom, all work was put away, the candles extinguished and the three small, frail figures paced backward and forward in the firelight, telling of their progress with poem or story, sketching suggested plots or incidents, and discussing many points connected with their work. It was during one of these evening talks that Charlotte announced her intention of departing from the accepted practice of novels and of making her heroine plain and insignificant instead of lovely and interesting. She told her sisters that they were wrong—even morally wrong—in making their heroines beautiful as a matter of course. They replied that it was impossible to make a heroine interesting on any other terms. Her answer was, "I will prove to you that you are wrong; I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours." "But," she was careful to add, when she told of this incident at a later time, "she is not myself any further than that."

As the story went on her interest in it became intense. Every moment she could spare she spent in writing eagerly almost feverishly, as the thoughts came rushing into her brain. But she never neglected the smallest of the household duties that fell to her share. Her father, though he guessed from her constant industry that some new project was going forward, was not taken into her confidence, lest if the effort resulted again in failure, he should feel the disappointment too keenly. But her sisters watched the progress of the story with a keenness of interest almost equal to her own.

At last there came some encouragement from the publishers. In the spring of 1847, *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* were accepted by a publisher, on condition of the authors paying the expenses of their production. *The Professor* was still going on its weary round. In July it was sent to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., and in August a reply was received, which, although it contained a rejection of the manuscript was written "so courteously, so considerately, in a spirit so rational, with a discrimination so enlightened, that this very refusal cheered the author better than a vulgarly expressed acceptance would have done. It was added that a work in three volumes would meet with careful attention."

Jane Eyre was at this time nearly finished; in August it was sent to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., and in October it was published. At this time *Vanity Fair* and *Dombey and Son* were still coming out in monthly numbers; Tennyson had just published *The Princess*, and the literary and artistic world was still occupied with Ruskin's *Modern Painters*. But in spite of all these pre-occupations the public found time to read *Jane Eyre*. The leading Reviews were cautious, and gave for the most part only meagre and guarded notices of this work by an unknown author; but at all the circulating libraries the demand for it increased every day. Readers discovered that here was a thrilling and exciting story in which the characters were so firmly drawn and the descriptive passages so powerful as to show it to be the work of a master hand.

Up in the lonely Yorkshire parsonage the author of the book scarcely dared to believe the reports which came to her from her publishers. She had become so accustomed to disappointment and failure that she had ceased to expect any other result from her efforts. But week by week the sales of *Jane Eyre* went up, and at last there could be no doubt that here, at last, was a great success. Curiosity with regard to the author grew until it reached fever-heat. Who could have written this wonderful book, which was capable of giving a fresh sensation even to the most jaded novel reader? The names of all the great writers of the day were passed in review, but without result, although for a time there was an inclination to attribute *Jane Eyre* to Thackeray. Most people believed 'Currer Bell' to be a man; there was a general suspicion that the three 'brothers Bell' were really one and the same person, and that *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* were earlier works by the author of *Jane Eyre*. The suggestion that the writer was a woman was, however, freely discussed. Miss Martineau, herself a celebrated authoress of the day, declared that there was a passage in the book concerning the sewing of some rings on curtains that could only have been written by a woman or an upholsterer. A writer in the *Quarterly*, December 1848, stated the conviction that if *Jane Eyre* were written by a woman, it must be by one who had forfeited the right to the society of her sex. This was only one among many attacks made upon the morality of *Jane Eyre*—attacks which aroused in its author the utmost pain and indignation. Charlotte Brontë was strict in her ideas of propriety, she was deeply and sincerely religious, and she had the most exalted ideals concerning her work as a novelist. But although outwardly she was so quiet, even prim, in her demeanour, fierce passions burnt within. The staid little lady of thirty with her plain face, shy manners and dress so scrupulously simple and neat, might seem an unlikely subject for romance; yet her conception of love was so strong, so deep and so wild that she could give it in her writings no conventional dress. She spoke out clearly and plainly. Her heroine had none of the wiles

and artifices, the mock-modesty and pretty coquetry which public opinion declared to be so becoming in a woman. It was this unconventionality in the portrayal of a woman's love that seemed to some sections of fashionable society so shocking. The book, though not free from melodrama and extravagance, has in it no suggestion of evil.

Gradually the secret of the authorship of the book was revealed. The old father was told first, and his pride and delight were extreme. Business complications made it necessary for Charlotte to reveal her identity to her publishers, and in June 1848 she, with her sister Anne, paid a hurried visit to London. But home troubles soon drove from their minds all thought of literary triumphs. In September their brother Branwell died, and in December 1848, Emily, whose health had for some time been failing, followed him. She died, stoical and uncomplaining as she had lived, and her wonderful genius was quenched in its immaturity. At the beginning of 1849 Anne Brontë, too, began to decline rapidly, and in May 1849 her death left Charlotte alone in the parsonage, the sole stay of her aged father. It was during these dark months that her next book, *Shirley*, was begun; and she persevered with it even in the terrible depression caused by such a series of bereavements. "Sometimes when I wake in the morning," she wrote to a friend, "and know that Solitude, Remembrance and Longing are to be almost my sole companions all day through—that at night I shall go to bed with them, that they will long keep me sleepless—that next morning I shall wake to them again—sometimes, Nell, I have a heavy heart of it. But crushed I am not, yet; nor robbed of elasticity, nor of hope, nor quite of endeavour. I have some strength to fight the battle of life. I am aware, and can acknowledge, I have many comforts, many mercies. Still I can *get on*. But I do hope and pray, that never may you, or anyone I love, be placed as I am. To sit in a lonely room—the clock ticking loud through a still house—and have open before the mind's eye the record of the last year, with its shocks, sufferings, losses—is a trial."

The remaining years of her life were passed in the courageous patient spirit indicated in this letter. *Shirley* appeared in October 1849 and was followed in 1853 by *Villette*, which is her masterpiece. Both these works were received with enthusiasm, and as Charlotte Brontë became generally known as their author, she grew to be an object of interest to all England. In her brief visits to London she was fêted and lionized, but she was always glad to return to the old parsonage, where the care of her father, and the management of the little household divided her time and attention with her books and her writing. In 1854 she married one of her father's curates, who had long been attached to her ; but her married happiness lasted but a few months. In March 1855 she died. From her own day to ours her fame has been growing, and her place as one of the greatest of the Victorian novelists is now assured.

CHAPTER L

SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE

FROM the bleak, bare moors of Yorkshire to the rich pastures of the Midlands—from Haworth parsonage with its grey stone walls standing four square to all the winds of heaven to the "charming red-brick ivy-covered house" called Griff, with its delightful, old-fashioned garden and noble trees—this is the change that meets us when we turn from the life of Charlotte Brontë to that of 'George Eliot.' A few weeks after the Rev. Patrick Brontë had brought his wife and children to their new home at Haworth, Robert Evans, estate agent, "whose extensive knowledge in very varied practical departments made his services valued through several counties," removed with his family to Griff. His eldest daughter, Christiana, was six years old; after her came Isaac, four years old, and then a little baby girl of four months, named Mary Ann. This was the future 'George Eliot.'

'George Eliot' was born only three years later than 'Currer Bell,' yet she did not begin her career as a novelist until two years after the life of her great sister-writer had closed. She did not approach her work with that irresistible consciousness of a fixed vocation which impelled the Brontë sisters to scribble tales and poems almost as soon as they could write; she advanced toward it slowly and haltingly, with a painful diffidence and a distrust of her own powers which only gave way before strong encouragement from outside. Hers was one of those natures that ripen slowly, and late. Her life naturally divides itself into three parts—an idyllic childhood; a strenuous youth, marked by great emotional and intellectual activity; and a magnificent maturity, in which she found her real life-work, and produced the series of great novels that

have made her name famous. For the material of these she went back to the scenes and characters that had been familiar to her in her early years, and she brought to the handling of this material the skill that had been gained during a long period of intellectual training. She was no wild untutored genius, but a woman who, while familiar with the most advanced philosophic and speculative ideas of her day, still kept a fresh and keen sympathy with primitive human emotions, a delight in things simple, homely and natural, a tender reverence for all that belonged to her childish days. It is this rare conjunction of qualities that gives to her novels their unique character. Over and over again she insists on the power that early recollections have to transform and glorify the experiences of later life. "The wood I walk in on this mild May day, with the young yellow-brown foliage of the oaks between me and the blue sky, the white star-flowers and the blue-eyed speedwell and the ground ivy at my feet—what grove of tropic palms, what strange ferns, or splendid broad-petalled blossoms, could ever thrill such deep and delicate fibres within me as this home scene? . . . Our delight in the sunshine on the deep-bladed grass to-day, might be no more than the faint perception of wearied souls, if it were not for the sunshine and the grass in the far-off years which still live in us, and transform our perception into love."

For twenty-one years Mary Ann Evans lived at the beautiful old house where she had been born. The chief figures in her life during this period are her father, her brother, and, later, Miss Lewis, a governess at the school to which she was sent. All her life long she felt strongly the need of some one person to whom she could cling, whom she could love with a passionate, exclusive affection, and who would love her after the same fashion. She found her first hero in her brother Isaac. *The Mill on the Floss* and the *Brother and Sister Sonnets* both tell of this early devotion.

> I cannot choose but think upon the time
> When our two lives grew like two buds that kiss
> At lightest thrill from the bee's swinging chime,
> Because the one so near the other is.

He was the elder and a little man
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,
And I the girl that puppy-like now ran,
Now lagged behind my brother's larger tread.
I held him wise, and when he talked to me
Of snakes and birds, and which God loved the best,
I thought his knowledge marked the boundary
Where men grew blind, though angels knew the rest.
If he said, " Hush ! " I tried to hold my breath.
Wherever he said, " Come ! " I stepped in faith.

The two children fished in the " brown canal " that made its slow way round a " grassy hill " and on across the spreading meadows ; they picked the blue forget-me-nots, and looked with awe on the " black-scathed grass " that " betrayed the past abode of mystic gypsies," and the little girl joined her brother in boyish games of marbles and top-spinning. But when Isaac Evans was eight years old he was sent away to a boarding school, and Mary Ann went to join her elder sister at a school at Attleboro.

School parted us ; we never found again
That childish world where our two spirits mingled
Like scents from varying roses that remain
One sweetness, nor can ever more be singled.
Yet the twin habit of that early time
Lingered for long about the heart and tongue :
We had been natives of one happy clime,
And its dear accent to our utterance clung.
Till the dire years whose awful name is Change
Had grasped our souls still yearning in divorce,
And pitiless shaped them in two forms that range
Two elements which sever their life's course.
But were another childhood-world my share,
I would be born a little sister there.

For about four years the sisters remained at Attleboro, and then proceeded to a larger school at Nuneaton. Here Mary Ann Evans formed her memorable friendship with Miss Lewis, whose fervent piety and evangelical opinions had a strong influence on her ardent and impressionable pupil. From Nuneaton she went to Coventry to a school kept by two sisters, the Misses Franklin, where her religious tendencies were deepened and strengthened. At all three schools she had shown remarkable aptitude in her studies, especially in music,

George Eliot 504

Sir F. W. Burton

Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

literature, and English composition, and was looked upon as a girl of great and unusual talents.

She came back to the old home at Griff in 1835, a girl of sixteen probably very much like her own heroine, Maggie Tulliver; —"A creature full of eager passionate longings for all that was beautiful and glad; thirsty for all knowledge; with an ear straining after dreamy music that died away and would not come near to her; with a blind unconscious yearning for something that would link together the wonderful impressions of this mysterious life, and give her soul a sense of home in it." But strongest of all her impulses was that toward religion. Her letters to Miss Lewis at this time show how completely her religion dominated her life. She even inclined to regard the music she loved so much as sinful because it distracted her thoughts from higher things, and she condemned novel reading as not only useless but pernicious.

In 1836 Mrs. Evans died, after a long and painful illness during which she was nursed with the greatest devotion by both her daughters. The next year Christiana Evans married, and the younger sister was left in the old house alone with her father. She became an excellent house-wife, and prided herself upon her household arrangements, her cooking and preserves. At the same time she tried to carry on the studies that had been begun at school. "My mind," she wrote to Miss Lewis in 1839, "presents an assemblage of disjointed specimens of history, ancient and modern; scraps of poetry picked up from Shakespeare, Cowper, Wordsworth and Milton; newspaper topics; morsels of Addison and Bacon, Latin verbs, geometry, entomology, and chemistry; Reviews and metaphysics—all arrested and petrified and smothered by the fast-thickening everyday accession of actual events, relative anxieties and household cares and vexations." She wrote poems for religious magazines, and she planned a complicated chart of ecclesiastical history. In 1840 she began to take lessons in German. Even at this time she had visions of accomplishing something really great in literature, but her natural diffidence too often threw her back into hopelessness.

In the last year of her life, when she was urged to write her autobiography, she replied, with reference to these early years, "The only thing I should care to dwell on would be the absolute despair I suffered from of ever being able to achieve anything. No one could ever have felt greater despair, and a knowledge of this might be a help to some other struggler."

Toward the end of 1840 Mr. Robert Evans gave up his business and his house to his son Isaac, and retired with his daughter to a pleasant semi-detached house in Coventry. This change opened an entirely new society to Mary Ann Evans. In Coventry she found friends who could sympathise with her intellectual pursuits and ambitions. Chief among these were Mr. Bray, a ribbon manufacturer, his wife, and his wife's brother and sister, Charles and Sara Hennell. Under these influences her intellectual development went on rapidly. Her religious opinions underwent a change, and the fervent Evangelical churchwoman gradually took up the attitude of reverent agnosticism which she maintained throughout her life. In 1843 she undertook her first serious piece of literary work, a translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, which occupied her for two years. From 1846 to 1849 most of her time was taken up in attendance on her father during his last illness. In May 1849 he died, and the daughter who, for more than twelve years had been his sole household companion was left alone. "What shall I be without my father?" she had written to her friends, the Brays, on the morning of the day on which he died, "It will seem as if a part of my moral nature were gone." She was worn out, both physically and mentally, and complete rest was essential. In the summer of 1849 she started with the Brays on a Continental tour, and when they returned home, she stayed on at Geneva for another eight months. The visit was in every way beneficial to her. She found kind and congenial friends, and returned to England in March 1850, refreshed and invigorated.

Robert Evans had left his daughter enough money to supply her with the necessities of life, but her ardent and ambitious nature made it impossible for her to spend her

time idly or uselessly. She determined to take up literary work as a serious profession, and in September 1851 she became sub-editor of the *Westminster Review*, and went to live in London. Her position now brought her into association with the leading writers of the day. Froude, Carlyle, Grote, John Stuart Mill, Harriet Martineau and Herbert Spencer were among those who were on its staff of contributors or were familiar figures at its office. Miss Evans herself contributed critical articles more or less regularly, and did a vast amount of miscellaneous literary work.

Toward the end of 1851, she was introduced by Mr. Herbert Spencer to George Henry Lewes, whose influence henceforward was to be the greatest factor in her life. He was a clever and brilliant writer on literary and philosophical subjects, and had written two novels, one of which, *Rose, Blanche, and Violet*, had brought him considerable reputation. His conversation was as brilliant as his writing, and his personality was extremely attractive. A friendship sprang up between him and Miss Evans, which ripened into a warm attachment. It was impossible for them to marry for Lewes had already a wife from whom he was separated under circumstances that made divorce impossible; but they lived for the rest of their lives on terms of the closest intimacy. Miss Evans found in Lewes the stay and support which she needed. He shielded her from anxieties in every possible way, guarded her interests, cheered and encouraged her in her fits of low spirits, and gave her the warm, sincere praise which was so helpful to her in battling with her excessive natural diffidence. But the greatest service he rendered her was that of encouraging her to her first essay in fiction. "It had always," Miss Evans tells us, in the account she gives of this memorable venture, "been a vague dream of mine that some time or other I might write a novel; and my shadowy conception of what the novel was to be, varied, of course, from one epoch of my life to another. But I never went further toward the actual writing of the novel than an introductory chapter describing a Staffordshire village, and the life of the neighbouring farm-houses; and as

the years passed on I lost any hope that I should ever be able to write a novel, just as I desponded about everything else in my future life. I always thought I was deficient in dramatic power, both of construction and dialogue, but I felt I should be at my ease in the descriptive parts of a novel. My 'introductory chapter' was pure description, though there were good materials in it for dramatic presentation." This chapter she one day read over to Mr. Lewes. He saw its merit, and urged her to continue the work, though he doubted, as she did herself, whether her dramatic power was equal to novel-writing. After long hesitation Miss Evans set about her story, encouraged at each step by Lewes. "You have wit, description, and philosophy," he used to say, "those go a good way toward the production of a novel. It is worth while to try the experiment."

In 1853 Miss Evans resigned her position on the *Westminster*, so that she was free to carry on her independent work. She began her story on September 22, 1856, and finished it on November 5. It was called *The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton*. Mr. Lewes sent it to *Blackwood's Magazine*, saying that it was the work of a friend who had never before attempted fiction, that it was to be the first of a series of sketches illustrative of the life of our country clergy about a quarter of a century ago; and if Mr. Blackwood considered it suitable for publication in his magazine, the rest of the series, which would be entitled *Scenes of Clerical Life*, would shortly be forthcoming. The story was accepted and the first part published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, January 1857. "Whatever may be the success of my stories," their author had written to Mr. Blackwood, "I shall be resolute in preserving my *incognito*—having observed that a *nom de plume* secures all the advantages without the disagreeables of reputation. Perhaps, therefore, it will be well to give you my prospective name, as a tub to throw to the whale in case of curious inquiries; and accordingly I subscribe myself, best and most sympathising of Editors, yours very truly, George Eliot.

This *nom de plume* has effectually displaced her real name;

we seldom speak of Mary Ann Evans, but often of George Eliot. George, she tells us, was chosen because it was Mr. Lewes's Christian name, and Eliot because it was "a good mouth-filling, easily pronounced name." The tales were at once successful; and as in the case of 'Currer Bell' curiosity with regard to the unknown author was very strongly excited. Mr. Carlyle, Froude and Thackeray thought very highly of the stories, Dickens was enthusiastic in their praise. He had never, he said, seen anything to equal "the exquisite truth and delicacy both of the humour and pathos of these stories." His appreciation gave him insight. While some readers were surmising that the *Scenes* must have been written by a clergyman, others attributing them to Bulwer Lytton, and a few giving credence to the claim made by a Mr. Liggins, of Warwickshire, Dickens declared that the author must be a woman; or, if not, "no man ever before had the art of making himself so like a woman since the world began."

The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton which began the series is the story of a country clergyman with a small income, a large family and an almost perfect wife. The Rev. Amos himself is in no way remarkable; he is one of those "commonplace people" of whom George Eliot always speaks with such wise tenderness. "These commonplace people," she says, "—many of them—bear a conscience, and have felt the sublime prompting to do the painful right; they have their unspoken sorrows, and their sacred joys; their hearts have perhaps gone out toward their first-born, and they have mourned over the irreclaimable dead. Nay, is there not a pathos in their very insignificance—in our comparison of their dim and narrow existence with the glorious possibilities of that human nature which they share? Depend upon it, you would gain unspeakably if you would learn with me to see some of the poetry and the pathos, the tragedy and the comedy, lying in the experience of a human soul that looks out through dull grey eyes, and that speaks in a voice of quite ordinary tones."

In these words, written in her first story, George Eliot tells us what is to be the aim and scope of all her novels, if we

except *Romola* and perhaps *Daniel Deronda*. All the others deal with quite ordinary people, to whom come the ordinary joys, sorrows and temptations of human life; and it is the author's greatest triumph that she can give to these commonplace histories not only interest but charm.

Mr. Gilfil's Love Story followed *Amos Barton*, and the third and last story of the series, *Janet's Repentance*, appeared before the end of the year. The plan of this story gives an opportunity for a sketch of Milby society which in freshness, spirit and humour is only equalled by that even more noted description of the society of St. Oggs, which came three years later in *The Mill on the Floss*. The characters are only inferior to the Tullivers and Pullets, the Glegs, the Deanes and the Guests of the later novel as slight sketches are inferior to detailed portraits. All the gifts which made George Eliot famous are to be found exemplified in these early stories. The moral earnestness, the ennobling conception of life and its duties, the delightful humour and tender sympathy are all there; and if we have no Maggie Tulliver, no Romola, and no Mrs. Poyser, the reason lies in lack of space for their full development, not in lack of manifested power.

The scenes of the stories are the scenes familiar to George Eliot's childhood. Shepperton Church, which she "began to look at with delight, even when I was so crude a member of the congregation that my nurse found it necessary to provide for the reinforcement of my devotional patience by smuggling bread and butter into the sacred edifice" is the church of Chilvers-Coton, near Nuneaton. Cheveril Manor is Arbury Park, where lived the Newdigate family, to whom Robert Evans acted as agent; Milby is Coventry. Some of the characters are drawn with such fidelity from living originals that they were at once recognized by friends and neighbours, to George Eliot's great regret and embarrassment. She never repeated this mistake; with further artistic development came the power of so transforming the material with which her experience supplied her as to produce from it a new creation rather than a copy.

SCENES OF CLERICAL LIFE

The *Scenes of Clerical Life* were completed October 9, 1857, and on October 22 *Adam Bede* was begun. The publication of this work (1859) secured George Eliot's position in the first rank of Victorian novelists. In 1860 came the *Mill on the Floss*, followed by *Silas Marner*, 1861; *Romola*, 1863; *Felix Holt*, 1866; *Middlemarch*, 1872; *Daniel Deronda*, 1876. On December 22, 1880, George Eliot died, at the age of sixty-one.

CHAPTER LI

SARTOR RESARTUS

ON a breezy upland about five miles from Dumfries, there stood in 1828 the farm of Craigenputtock—Anglicized, the Hill of Hawks. All round it lay great stretches of undulating meadow land, rising in front to the rolling heather-covered heights of the Solway hills. There were few trees to be seen, except here and there a belt of hardy firs, for Craigenputtock lay seven hundred feet above the level of the sea, and the bleak, searching winds checked all vegetable growth. The house itself was a plain, solid-looking structure, white with rough cast, and having a small, bare porch in front. Adjoining it stood a small cottage, and behind lay the farm buildings. There was no other house in sight, and no road leading up to the front door of the farm-house. Evidently the tenants of Craigenputtock must be content to live in entire seclusion from the world.

To this home there came in the spring of 1828 Thomas Carlyle and his brilliant, delicate, town-bred wife. They had been married for about a year and a half, and during that time had lived in a small house in Edinburgh. Now, straitened means and the necessity of perfect quiet for his literary work had induced Carlyle to migrate to his wife's inheritance, the farm of Craigenputtock. He was thirty-two years old and had already made for himself a literary reputation by means of his *Life of Schiller* and his translation of *Wilhelm Meister*. In the seclusion of this country home he hoped to accomplish some higher and more important work.

But first of all provision must be made for the expenses of the small household. A little money went a long way at

Craigenputtock. The farm which was managed by Carlyle's brother Alexander, supplied milk and eggs and ham and poultry; from Scotsbrig—about a day's journey to the west—the home of his mother and father, came wheat-flour and oatmeal. The simple, frugal habits of the Scottish peasant still clung to Carlyle, and his wife brought to the management of the household all the shrewd common sense which in her, as in her husband, existed side by side with many strange and brilliant qualities. Some money, however, the household must have. There was John Carlyle, another brother, studying for a doctor at Munich, whose expenses must be paid. There were clothes to buy, and servants' wages to be found, and such improvements made to the old house as would render it a comfortable habitation.

So Carlyle set to work on reviews and magazine articles which at this time editors were only too willing to take from a contributor who bid fair to be a new light in the literary world. The peace and stillness for which, among the streets of Edinburgh, he had so bitterly and so vainly groaned were now his in full measure. To the little library where he sat at work "with desks, and books, and every accoutrement in fairest order," the sweet, fresh air bore only pleasant country sounds subdued to a faint and musical murmur. "Shame befall me," wrote Carlyle, "if I ought to complain, except it be of my own stupidity and pusillanimity." His words show that he knew and deplored the nervous irritability of disposition which made it almost impossible for him not to 'complain,' even under the most favourable circumstances. He had hoped that the unquiet tormenting spirit that made life so hard for him and for those about him, had been left behind in the din of the city; but it had followed him to his country home. There were many small privations and annoyances to be endured at Craigenputtock, and in spite of the splendid courage with which he met great trials, Carlyle was unable to bear with calmness the little frets of everyday life. In his diary there is a note: "Finished a paper on Burns, September 16, 1828, at this Devil's Den, Craigenputtock." The entry is probably

only the result of a passing mood, yet it serves to show that the work done in this country home was done with the same stress and labour, the same groaning and tribulation as that accomplished in town. But the days were not always dark. Sometimes Carlyle allows that the house is "substantial, comfortable, and even half-elegant," and that when the planned improvements have been carried out this hermitage will positively become a very tolerable place." In these times of comparative peace work went on more smoothly. Carlyle varied his literary labours with the planting of potatoes and the sticking of peas, and with rides on his 'red chestnut Irish doctor' the good horse Larry. Even when winter came there were some consolations, though Craigenputtock was cut off from the outside world save when, on Saturday evening, the weekly cart came struggling up from Dumfries bringing various household necessaries and some eagerly expected letters. "You cannot figure," wrote Carlyle, "the stillness of these moors in a November drizzle. Nevertheless I walk often, under cloud of night, in good Ecclefechan clogs, down as far as Carstammon Burn . . . conversing with the void heaven in the most pleasant fashion."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Carlyle too was realizing the drawbacks of this pastoral existence. She was a clever, cultured woman, but had given up her own ambitions to minister to the genius of her husband. To preserve his peace and well-being had become her aim in life. Efficient servants would not come to the lonely farmhouse, and the rough Scottish lasses who succeeded one another as 'maid-of-all work' could not keep the house in that spotless order and serve the meals with that dainty cleanliness which both Carlyle and his wife demanded. It followed that Mrs. Carlyle must do much of the menial work with her own hands. She cooked, and cleaned, and sewed, she took care of the poultry and milked the cows when the byre-woman was out of the way. She learned to bake bread for her dyspeptic husband, who could not eat the bread that came from the baker's at Dumfries. She even scoured the floors and polished the grates, Carlyle, with his pipe in

Thomas Carlyle

his mouth, looking approvingly on. It did not occur to him that there was anything exceptional in all this. In his boyhood he had been used to see his mother serve her household after the same fashion, and he did not realize how great was the difference between her and his delicate wife. Mrs. Carlyle, on her part, tried not to complain, satisfied if, with all her toil, she could serve the husband, who in spite of seeming roughness and indifference, loved her so well, and depended on her so entirely.

Friends did what they could to lighten this uncongenial solitude, and the story of their visits makes the bright spots in a dull, monotonous record. Literary work progressed more or less steadily, according to the mood of the writer, and the money for present necessities was gained, with a little to put by. But as time went on, magazine editors began to grow somewhat shy of articles by Thomas Carlyle. The intensity of his convictions and the fervency with which he preached a gospel that made no concessions to the prejudices or the weaknesses of his readers offended many. No representations could induce him to court popularity. He conceived it to be his duty to preach to a corrupt generation against the cant, the shams, the selfishness and the frivolity which were destroying national life. The "terrible earnestness" of which Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, accused him, forbade him to soften or to palliate what he felt to be the truth. Jeffrey was a true and attached friend both to Carlyle and his wife, who refused to be offended by repeated rebuffs, and who again and again essayed the difficult task of helping a man whose irritable pride took offence at the most kindly meant offers. He, like other editors, recognized the extraordinary talents of this self-exiled hermit of Craigenputtock, and tried in vain to induce him to adopt the more conciliatory tone which was necessary to make his work acceptable to the public. But to Carlyle's stern integrity all such representations savoured of temptations from the Evil One, and no considerations of fortune or even of daily bread, could lead him to lower the lofty standard he had set up.

Among all these discouragements some of his finest and most lasting work was accomplished. On October 28, 1830, he made this entry in his journal: "Written a strange piece 'On Clothes.' Know not what will come of it." . . . "Sent away the 'Clothes,' of which I could make a kind of book, but cannot afford it." This article on clothes was the germ which afterward developed into *Sartor Resartus*. It found no favour with the editors to whom it was submitted. An entry in the journal under the date February 7, 1831, says, "Sent to Jack" (his brother) "to liberate my 'Teufelsdröckh' from editorial durance in London, and am seriously thinking to make a book of it. The thing is not right—not *art;* yet perhaps a nearer approach to art than I have yet made. We ought to try."

The spring of 1831 saw the Carlyles in dire straits for money. A *History of German Literature* on which much precious time had been spent could find no publisher; payment for work that had been accepted came in only after long delay. There was much bargaining with editors and humiliating refusals of work, which fretted Carlyle's proud, impatient spirit into a state of fierce irritability. The problem of how the expenses of the frugal household were to be met became an increasingly serious one; yet, all the time, Carlyle was sending help to the very utmost his means permitted, to two brothers whose circumstances were even worse than his own, and was haughtily refusing the help which Jeffrey, with the utmost delicacy, repeatedly offered to him. It was in the turmoil of spirit which all these circumstances combined to produce that *Sartor Resartus* was written. It bears traces of the disturbance of its author's mind in its tumultuous, vehement style. Words and sentences are piled upon one another without any attempt at calm, orderly arrangement. It was written straight from Carlyle's heart, and more than any other of his books it reveals his strange and fascinating personality. In it he indulged to the utmost the wild and wilful humour which led him to clothe his thoughts in language that seemed to the ordinary man extravagant and unintelligible. He himself was fully conscious

of the strange, unusual character of his work. "I am leading the stillest life," he wrote to his brother, "musing amid the pale sunshine, or rude winds of October Tire the Trees, when I go walking in this almost ghastly solitude, and for the rest writing with impetuosity. . . . What I am writing at is the strangest of all things. A very singular piece, I assure you. It glances from heaven to earth and back again, in a strange, satirical frenzy, whether fine or not remains to be seen."

The idea upon which the book is founded is that all customs, institutions, creeds, fashions and ceremonies are simply the clothes in which man dresses his ideas and beliefs, his loves and his hates, so that he is able to live peaceably and decently as a member of a civilized society. It is not an entirely original notion. Swift's *Tale of a Tub* contains a foreshadowing of it, and critics have pointed out, also, Carlyle's indebtedness to various German authors. But the marvellous handling of the subject gives the book a claim to originality in the highest sense of that much misused word. It purports to be founded on the work of a German professor, one Herr Diogenes Teufelsdröckh of Weissnichtwo (Know-not-where) author of a book entitled *Clothes, their Origin and Influence*, and the opening chapters give, with all the apparatus of mystification that Carlyle loved, an account of the way in which the necessary manuscript was obtained through the medium of Herr Hofrathe Hanschnecke (Grasshopper). The manuscript is contained in six paper bags, and consists of innumerable scraps of paper without order, arrangement or date. The editor imagines himself set down to the task of sorting, arranging, and copying these fragments, and evolving from them a biography of Herr Teufelsdröckh and a summary of his *Philosophy of Clothes*.

This preliminary explanation occupies the greater part of the first book. The second book is mainly biographical, and into his account of the life of the mythical German professor, Carlyle has woven passages from his own history. "Let me not quarrel with my upbringing," he says, in one such passage. "It was rigorous, too frugal, compressively secluded, every

way unscientific; yet in that very strictness and domestic solitude might there not lie the root of deeper earnestness, of the stem from which all noble fruit must grow? Above all, how unskilful soever, it was loving, it was well-meant, honest; whereby every deficiency was helped. My kind mother . . . did me one altogether invaluable service; she taught me, less indeed by word than by act and daily reverent look and habitude, her own simple version of the Christian faith." This is a faithful picture of the frugal, pious home in which Carlyle was brought up, and of the peasant-mother whom, to the end of his life, he reverenced and loved.

By and by Teufelsdröckh went to school, but of that insignificant portion of his education almost no notice, he says, need be taken. "I learned what others learn; and kept it stored by in a corner of my head, seeing as yet no manner of use in it. . . . Meanwhile, what printed thing whatsoever I could meet with I read." Later, he tells of his life at the University. "Had you anywhere in Crim Tartary walled in a square enclosure; furnished it with a small, ill-chosen Library; and then turned loose into it eleven hundred Christian striplings, to tumble about as they listed from three to seven years: certain persons under the title of Professors being stationed at the gates to declare aloud that it was a University, and exact considerable admission fees—you had, not indeed in mechanical structure, yet in spirit and result, some imperfect resemblance of our High Seminary." This description agrees substantially with Carlyle's recorded opinion of Edinburgh University, of which he was a student from 1809–1814—the years which followed the brilliant period of which Walter Scott has given such a very different account.

Teufelsdröckh's love passages with 'Blumine' are probably founded upon Carlyle's recollections of his own early love, Margaret Gordon, whom he met while he held the post of mathematical tutor at Annan, where he went upon leaving the University. Like Teufelsdröckh's, his suit was unsuccessful, and his weariness and disappointment, his spiritual conflicts and tormenting doubts at this period of his life may well have

furnished the material for the chapters on the *Sorrows of Teufelsdröckh* and *The Everlasting No.* But the most striking autobiographical passage is that which describes Teufelsdröckh's "Spiritual New Birth," which has its counterpart in an experience of Carlyle in June 1821, to which he always looked as a turning-point in his life. "Full of such humour, and perhaps the miserablest man in the whole French Capital or Suburbs, was I, one sultry Dogday, after much perambulation, toiling along the dirty little Rue Saint Thomas de l'Enfer . . . when, all at once, there rose a Thought in me, and I asked myself: 'What *art* thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou for ever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped! what is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee! Death? Well, Death: and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet it and defy it!' And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me forever. I was strong, and of unknown strength; a spirit, almost a god. Ever from that time, the temper of my misery was changed; not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance."

The third book of *Sartor Resartus* deals exclusively with the principles of the Clothes Philosophy. It is impossible here to give even a sketch of the contents of this section. We will quote only one passage which may give some idea of the tone of the whole: "But deepest of all illusory Appearances, for hiding Wonder, as for many other ends, are your two grand fundamental world-enveloping Appearances, SPACE and TIME. These, as spun and woven for us from before Birth itself, to clothe our celestial ME for dwelling here, and yet to blind it,—lie all-embracing, as the universal canvas, or warp and woof, whereby all minor Illusions, in this Phantasm Existence, weave and paint themselves. In vain, while here on Earth, shall you

endeavour to strip them off; you can, at best, but rend them asunder for moments, and look through."

This then was the book in which Carlyle inscribed, with ever-rising fervour and tumultuous fluency the most cherished convictions of his soul. It was finished by the end of July and given to the critic—his wife—whose opinion he most valued, and whose judgment he had proved to be reliable. "It is a work of genius, dear," she said, when she had read the last page, and, encouraged by this verdict, Carlyle resolved to take the book up to London himself, and try to find a publisher. For this great purpose he managed to bring himself to accept a loan of £50 from Jeffrey, and on August 9, 1831, arrived in London. Next day he visited the publishers, but found no one ready to risk the production of a book so little likely to please the general public. Day after day he went his weary round, but with no result. The book was returned on his hands, and at last it became clear to him that, for this time at least, *Sartor Resartus* could find no publisher.

Discouraged, but still convinced of the true worth of the book, Carlyle put it for a time aside, and turned resolutely once more to the writing of magazine articles. That winter he spent in London, where his wife joined him on October 1. They soon attracted a circle of friends, drawn from the most brilliant literary society of London, and the next six months were passed pleasantly and profitably. The work that Carlyle did that winter ranks among his very best, and although he still refused to make any concessions to public taste, he managed to gain a small circle of intellectual readers who became his loyal and constant supporters. The financial prospect cleared, and consequently the health and spirits of the much-tried pair improved.

By April 1832 they were back at Craigenputtock, to the dreary solitude which to both of them had now become hateful. But there seemed little prospect of change. The results of Carlyle's literary work just kept the household going, but gave them no encouragement to increase their expenses. In the summer of 1833 the editor of *Fraser's Magazine* consented

to produce *Sartor Resartus* in ten successive instalments. But the venture was an unlucky one. The first instalment was received with strong disapproval by the public. Who but a madman, they asked, could have written such a chaotic, unintelligible, ridiculous medley. Subscribers threatened to withdraw their support if the magazine continued to publish such stuff. Only here and there a clear-sighted reader discerned the real meaning and beauty of the work. In America only did it win even a small measure of popularity. There an edition of the complete book was printed from the pages of *Fraser's*, and chiefly through the efforts of Emerson, had a sufficient sale to gain, in all, profits of £400 for its writer.

The winter of 1833–34 passed heavily, and in the spring the Carlyles resolved to take a bold step, give up their home at Craigenputtock and establish themselves in London. Their reserve fund amounted to between two and three hundred pounds—all that stood between them and want. The venture was a desperate one, but it was undertaken with courage and resolution. June 1834 saw them settled at Cheyne Row, Chelsea, with Leigh Hunt for a neighbour. Here Carlyle set to work upon his new book on the French Revolution. *Sartor Resartus* had frightened all the magazine editors so much that very little could be hoped from the writing of articles. If this new work did not succeed there was nothing for it, Carlyle thought, but to give up literature entirely, and cross the Atlantic to America, with a spade and a pick.

But happily this desperate expedient did not become necessary. Self-denial and careful management enabled the little household to be carried on until, in 1837, the *French Revolution* was finished and published. The success of this book was as complete as had been the failure of *Sartor Resartus*. Carlyle became a literary lion sought after by the fashionable world, and flattered by great ladies. A little group of enthusiastic disciples gathered round him—among them James Anthony Froude, who afterward became his biographer, and the young novelist, Charles Dickens, fresh from the success of *Pickwick*. In 1838 the proprietors of *Fraser's Magazine* took

courage, and published *Sartor Resartus* as a separate book. It had a moderate, but steadily increasing sale. Forty-three years later, a few months before Carlyle's death, a cheap edition was issued, and 30,000 copies were sold within a few weeks.

The remaining years of Carlyle's life are marked mainly by his literary productions. He was free from money worries, and was recognized as the prophet of a new gospel. His life was not a happy one, for his own unfortunate temperament caused him to suffer a martyrdom of self-torment; and chronic dyspepsia added to his troubles. But in spite of these things his record of work is a fine one. A series of political tracts showed his interest in the burning questions of the day. His *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* was published in 1845, and *Frederick the Great* occupied him from 1851 to 1865. In 1866 came the terribly sudden death of Mrs. Carlyle, which saddened the rest of his life. His last years were given to the writing of his *Reminiscences*. He died on February 5, 1881. There was a general wish on the part of the public that he should be given a place in Westminster Abbey, but he himself had desired to rest among the kinsfolk to whom he had been so loyally and so tenderly attached, and he was buried in the churchyard of remote Ecclefechan.

CHAPTER LII

MODERN PAINTERS

JOHN RUSKIN stands by the side of Thomas Carlyle as an accredited prophet of the nineteenth century. Each of these men had a gospel to preach and preached it with a fervour that often became extravagance; with much denunciation of those who did not agree with its special tenets, with many inconsistencies, exaggerations, even absurdities. But these things were the almost necessary accompaniments of the intense conviction which possessed both Carlyle and Ruskin of the truth and the urgency of their gospel, and they fail altogether to obscure the great and noble qualities either of the men or of their writings. The message of both these latter-day prophets is substantially the same: England is too much absorbed in money-getting and money-spending, and has sunk into a condition in which she is unable to distinguish between what is true and lovely, and what is false and hateful; men must rouse up, and cast away the shams they have held so long, must follow, though through labour and sorrow, the clear shining of truth. But their manner of approaching and presenting their gospel differs almost as widely as the free, hardy childhood of Thomas Carlyle differs from the hot-house rearing of John Ruskin. Carlyle ripened late, and produced no great original work until he was nearly thirty-seven years old, but the extraordinary precocity of Ruskin arouses the same feeling of wonder, almost of alarm, as would be experienced on seeing fully formed apples hanging on a tree, side by side with the pink-and-white blossoms of spring-time.

John Ruskin was, from his earliest years, destined and

trained for greatness. His father was a wealthy wine-merchant, a man of culture and education; his mother was handsome, energetic, and deeply religious. John, their only child, was strictly brought up, according to the rigid, narrow rule of the Puritanic sect to which his mother belonged. The home was luxurious, too luxurious, he concluded, when he thought about it in after years, but the boy was allowed no childish indulgences. Sunday especially was a day of gloom, with its dinner of cold mutton, its long services, its indefinable air of austerity and aloofness from all ordinary human affairs. "A lurid shade," Ruskin tells us, "was cast over Friday and Saturday by the horrible sense that Sunday was coming and was inevitable." Every day he read aloud to his mother a chapter out of the Bible, hard words and genealogies included. He was whipped when he was "naughty"—and in his mother's stern code many things ranked as "naughty" which were simply natural. He had no playfellows or companions, and was carefully secluded from the world without, whose very air, his mother deemed would be contamination to this chosen vessel. He was watched and tended, guided, chidden and instructed with such unceasing and anxious care that it is small wonder he learned to think of himself as the centre of his little Universe. His spiritual and intellectual growth was stimulated in every possible way and he responded with the eager readiness of a quick and supersensitive nature. Before he was four he could read and write fluently and correctly. At seven he wrote an original story and illustrated it with his own drawings; at nine he composed a poem entitled *Eudosia: a Poem on the Universe.* He described himself in after years as having led at this time "a very small, perky, contented, conceited Cock-Robinson-Crusoe sort of life" in the house at Herne Hill to which the family had removed when John Ruskin the younger was four years old. Home life was varied by long and frequent tours through England, Scotland, France, Belgium and Switzerland. These journeys which his father undertook periodically for business purposes, were made in a carriage or post-chaise, so that the three—for Mrs. Ruskin

was always one of the party—had exceptional opportunities of observing all the features of the surrounding country. This in itself was an education to the impressionable and beauty-loving boy. When he was fourteen he first saw the Alps, which all his life long he loved so passionately and wrote of so eloquently. "I went down that evening from the garden-terrace of Schaffhausen," he says, "with my destiny fixed in all of it that was to be sacred and useful. To that terrace and the shore of the Lake of Geneva, my heart and faith return to this day, in every impulse that is yet nobly alive in them, and every thought that has in it help or peace."

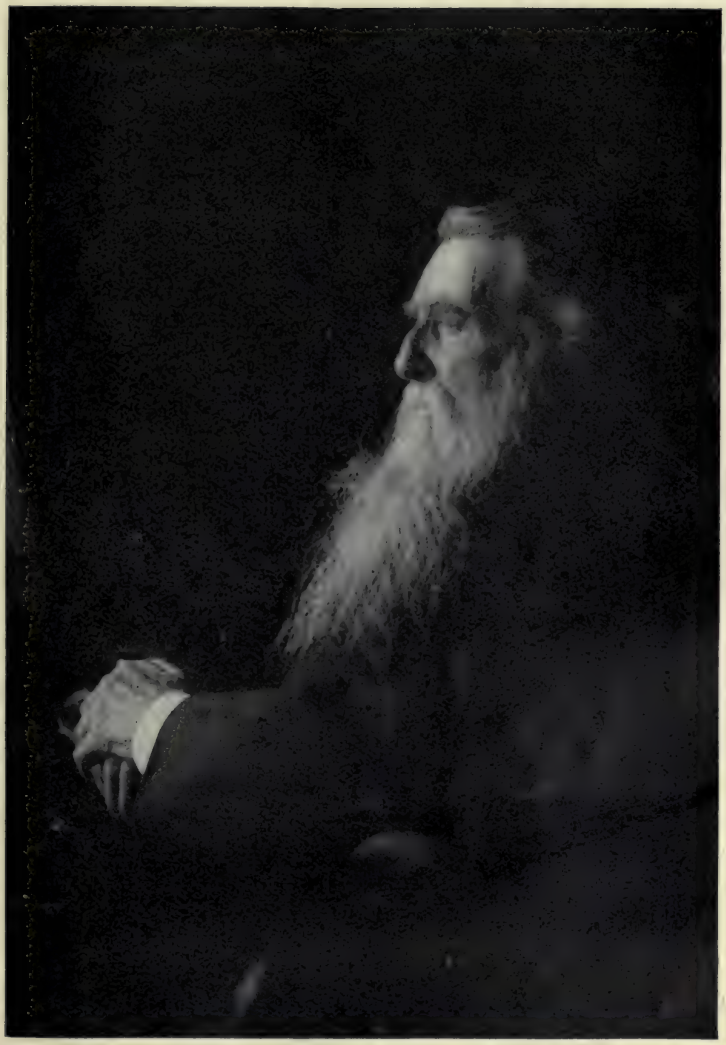
When he was at home he had the best masters that could be obtained for various educational subjects, and for a short time he attended a day-school. But he never had any real school training, such as falls to the lot of most English boys, and the watchful care of his parents never relaxed. Each new sign of genius in their remarkable son was hailed with such intense satisfaction as urged him on to further efforts. He produced between his seventh and his eighteenth year a marvellous quantity of poetry; over ten thousand lines have been preserved and printed in the two volumes of selections from his early works. None of the many poems show any touch of real poetic genius, but the metre is surprisingly correct and the boy's facility in imitating the various poets—Pope, Byron, Shelley, Scott, Wordsworth—shows something more than a mere trick of versification.

His earliest prose work is of the same character as his poetry—correct, but undistinguished. When he was fifteen three of his pieces were printed in London's *Magazine of Natural History*, the surprising subjects of which are, the geologic strata of Mt. Blanc, the perforation of a leaden pipe by rats, the causes of the colour of Rhine-water. In 1837 the youth of eighteen, who had seen many of the world's most famous pictures, and had already shown some of that love-directed understanding of art which distinguished him in after years, was roused to indignation by an attack on Turner's pictures, in *Blackwood's Magazine*. In the heat of his wrath he

sat down and wrote a vehement reply, defending the painter, and he submitted this to Turner himself before sending it to the editor of *Blackwood*. The great painter was probably surprised and amused at the effusion, but he does not seem to have been anxious that the enthusiastic defence of his young admirer should be made public, and contented himself with forwarding the paper to the purchaser of the picture—*Juliet at Venice*—which had been the chief object of the attack. This early effort is valuable as being the germ of *Modern Painters*.

In 1836 Ruskin went up to Oxford as a gentleman commoner. At this time he was a tall delicate lad of seventeen, with bright, expressive blue eyes set under strongly marked brows, curling brown hair, and an air of extreme, almost nervous sensibility. He was excessively shy, in spite of the 'fountain of pure conceit' which he tells us bubbled in his heart; awkward and unused to society in spite of all his travels. At first he was laughed at as a 'girl,' but soon his really fine qualities were recognized by a few of his fellows, and be became popular among those whose liking was best worth having. His mother's anxious care did not relax even now that her boy was approaching manhood. She left her beautiful home, and took lodgings in Oxford during term time; and every evening John dutifully visited and took tea with her.

His fond parents, he tells us, had made up their minds that he should "take all the prizes every year, and a double first to finish with; marry Lady Clara Vere de Vere; write poetry as good as Byron's, only pious; preach sermons as good as Bossuet's, only Protestant; be made, at forty, Bishop of Winchester, and, at fifty, Primate of England." But unfortunately Ruskin failed to fulfil any of these expectations. At Oxford he won the Newdigate prize for English verse, and, in spite of an absence of nearly a year and a half, owing to a terrible breakdown in health, did so well in his Final Examination that he was awarded an honorary Fourth Class. He gained no other honours, and, on leaving the University he cruelly disappointed his parents by refusing to become a minister of



John Ruskin 526

From a Photograph by Fredk. Hollyer

the Church, and so set out toward the Primacy. His views as to his future life were by no means clear, and for a time he dreamed happily among his pictures and his books, and best of all, made journeys to his beloved Alps, where, surrounded by the clouds and mountains that were 'life to him,' he gradually fitted himself for the work that was soon to present itself.

His boyish admiration of Turner had increased through a fuller understanding of the great painter's subjects and methods. He possessed, by the time he was twenty-one, three great 'Turners' given him by his father, and had thus begun the collection of pictures which was such a joy to him throughout his life. He studied also all the painter's accessible works, and in June 1840 was introduced to the great man himself. "I found him," says Ruskin, "a somewhat eccentric, keen-mannered, matter-of-fact, English-minded gentleman; good-natured evidently, bad-tempered evidently, hating humbug of all sorts, shrewd, perhaps a little selfish, highly intellectual, the powers of the mind not brought out with any delight in their manifestation, or intention of display, but flashing out occasionally in a word or a look." This shrewd little character sketch shows that Ruskin's enthusiasm for Turner's paintings did not proceed from blind hero-worship but from a real and intelligent appreciation of the works themselves.

The year 1841 was spent in somewhat desultory art study and literary work. The spring and summer of 1842 were passed in Switzerland, and, on returning home Ruskin began the first volume of *Modern Painters*. His father took the greatest interest in the progress of the work, and early realized that it was going to be something worthy of the son of whom he had formed such high hopes. "The work," Ruskin said, in his Preface to the first edition, "originated in indignation at the shallow and false criticisms of the periodicals of the day on the works of the great living artist to whom it principally refers. It was intended to be a short pamphlet, reprobating the manner and style of these critiques, and pointing out their

perilous tendency, as guides of public feeling. But, as point after point presented itself for demonstration, I found myself compelled to amplify what was at first a letter to the editor of a Review, into something very like a treatise on art, to which I was obliged to give the more consistency and completeness because it advocated opinions which, to the ordinary connoisseur, will sound heretical. I now scarcely know whether I should announce it as an Essay on Landscape Painting, and apologize for its frequent reference to the works of a particular master; or, announcing it as a critique on particular works, apologize for its lengthy discussion of general principles." The writer first sets out to answer the question as to what is meant by true greatness in art, and arrives at the definition "the greatest picture is that which conveys to the mind of the spectator the greatest number of the greatest ideas." He proceeds to consider "all the sources of pleasure, or of any other good, to be derived from works of art," and sets these out under five heads, viz., ideas of Power, ideas of Imitation, ideas of Truth, ideas of Beauty, ideas of Relation. Each of these he examines in some detail.

Part II deals solely with Truth in art, in its general and its particular application, and gives opportunity for some of those wonderful word pictures for which Ruskin is famous. He is speaking of truth of colour, and he illustrates what he has to say by that marvellous passage, more gorgeous than the most gorgeous work of Turner, in which he describes the vision of colour he had seen one day in the Campagna. We can imagine the ardent author reading such passages as this to his father and mother in the quiet evenings at Herne Hill, and their delighted realization that some part of the great hopes they had entertained for him had come true. Some passages, we are told, drew tears of joy from their eyes, and the young man of twenty-three, who was still a child in his relations with his parents, felt a boy's happy triumph in their commendation. When the time came for publication, however, the father's pride was not so blind but that he could see that the world of art might not take too kindly this

high-toned instruction and setting-to-rights from an inexperienced youth; he therefore decreed that the books should be published anonymously, and signed "A Graduate of Oxford." But the precaution was needless. The presumption of *Modern Painters* was freely forgiven by virtue of its splendid qualities, and although the professional critics sneered, they could not restrain the unanimous burst of admiration which came from the best informed literary and artistic circles. That great oracle, *The Edinburgh Review*, declared that the book would "work a complete revolution in the world of taste." Tennyson, who had just reappeared in the world of letters after his ten years' silence, recognized in the author of *Modern Painters* a brother poet; Turner, though the publicity into which the book had brought him proved rather embarrassing, seems to have felt deeply and sincerely the young man's tribute. Society was eager to know him; and the proud father, relieved from his fears, urged a continuation of the work. This necessitated another expedition to Switzerland, and the whole family started in May 1844. In Switzerland John restudied the mountains he knew so well, and recorded fresh impressions. But the most memorable incident of the expedition was the visit to the Louvre at Paris on the homeward journey, and the conviction which the pictures it contained brought home to the young writer that there was a whole field of art that he had neglected. He knew little or nothing of early Italian painters, and he saw now how impossible it was to omit these from the scheme of his book. After an autumn and winter spent in hard study at the beautiful country house at Denmark Hill that his father had lately bought, John started alone (for the first time) for Pisa and Florence. Here he studied with ardour, returning home when the winter came on to write the second part of his book. It was published in 1846, and won for its writer a place still higher than that which he had held before. It dealt chiefly with ideas of Beauty, but its propositions did not appear so startlingly new as those of the first volume had done. The public had had three years to assimilate the main propositions of Ruskin's art theory, and

when the second volume appeared they had leisure to note and to praise the beauty of its style and language. "It is usually read for its pretty passages," Ruskin complains, "its theory of beauty is scarcely ever noticed."

The next three years were spent in travels among the Alps, and in the study which produced in 1849 *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. It was a period of despondency and ill-health culminating in 1848 in a dangerous illness. Foreign travel again proved a remedy, and as a result of an Italian sojourn in 1850 and 1851 appeared *The Stones of Venice*. These two books led Ruskin to examine into the conditions under which the actual workmen employed in raising such noble buildings as he described did their humble but most necessary part, and helped to turn his thoughts toward the social questions which were soon to become of paramount interest to him. His interests, indeed, were widening in all directions, and the young art critic was becoming a man of many and most varied occupations. In 1853 he began his career as a lecturer, and in 1854 became interested in the Working Men's Institute, founded by Frederick Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley, with the assistance of many other eminent men. Ruskin became one of their most enthusiastic helpers. He taught at the College for four years, and gave generous aid in money and in books. It is impossible to catalogue all his numerous activities in the years between 1850 and 1860. He had become a personal friend and ardent disciple of Thomas Carlyle, had formed a close intimacy with the Brownings, and had altogether escaped from the narrow environment of his earlier years, though he still lived with his father and mother at the house at Denmark Hill. He had lectured not only in London but at Oxford, Cambridge, and other large towns, had taken an active part in all the movements of the time whose object was to bring opportunities for higher education within the reach of the working classes, and had become the recognized authority of his day on all matters connected with art. It was out of this fuller and richer experience that he wrote the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*, which was published in 1860.

Ruskin was now forty years old. With the publication of the last volume of *Modern Painters* he had, as it were, ridded himself of the residue of thoughts connected with pure art to which his early study and devotion had given rise; and he turned now to the absorbing subject of social reform. All the books—and they are many—which he wrote during the second forty years of his life have to do, in some way, with social matters. None of them deal with these exclusively, for Ruskin's mind possessed such rare powers of association and connexion, that all subjects, whether they belonged to art, science, economics or ethics, were so linked together that it was impossible to see how the chain of ideas would extend itself. He was once announced to give a lecture on 'Crystallography,' and he began by telling his audience that he intended to speak on 'Cistercian Architecture,' but that the change of title was of little moment. "For," said he, "if I had begun to speak about Cistercian Abbeys, I should have been sure to get on crystals presently; and if I had begun upon crystals, I should have soon drifted into architecture." It is the quality so humorously suggested in this speech that gives Ruskin's writings much of their characteristic charm and his teaching much of its characteristic value.

Of his career as a social reformer we shall not attempt here to speak. His fundamental principles were identical with those on which he had based his art teaching—that from a corrupt national life no good thing can come; that truth is the one vital necessity; that shams are deadly; that the real worth of anything can not be judged by its money value; that men should open their eyes to see and know the things of the Spirit. His influence on his generation, and on ours, cannot be measured, and though much has been said about the rhapsodies and contradictions which make it so hard for the ordinary person to understand what he has to say, his teaching is really, to those who will take the trouble to study his works patiently and carefully, of the simplest and most consistent. "I grew daily more sure," he wrote at the end of his long life, when in his peaceful retreat by Lake Coniston he looked back

over the years that had gone," that the peace of God rested on all the dutiful and kindly hearts of the laborious poor; and the only constant form of pure religion was in useful work, faithful love, and stintless charity." He died on January 20, 1900, a year and two days before Queen Victoria, of whose long reign he had been such an outstanding figure.

CHAPTER LIII

THE IDYLLS OF THE KING

TENNYSON and Browning are the poets of the Victorian era as Carlyle and Ruskin are its prophets. They were almost exact contemporaries, Tennyson's life extending from 1809 to 1892, and Browning's from 1812 to 1889. Both, though in different ways, are fully representative of the spirit of the age, and in their work is summed up and crowned the work of a company of lesser poets who helped to give glory to the reign of the great Queen.

Alfred Tennyson was born and spent his childhood at his father's rectory of Somersby, in north Lincolnshire. He was the fourth in a family of eight sons and four daughters. His love for poetry was shown while he was quite a little lad, and he very early began to make verses. When he was seven years old he was sent to school at Louth. His memories of his schooldays were mainly unhappy ones, and the best part of his early education he gained from his own reading in his father's fine library. In 1827 he and his brother Charles published a book of poems which they called *Poems by Two Brothers*. For this a local bookseller gave them twenty pounds, and with part of this money they hired a carriage, drove fourteen miles to Mablethorpe, and there "shared their triumph with the winds and waves."

In February 1828 Alfred Tennyson entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he quickly made for himself a position, and friends. "Alfred Tennyson was our hero, the great hero of our day," wrote one of these; and another described him as, "Six feet high, broad-chested, strong-limbed, his face Shakespearean, with deep eyelids, his forehead ample, crowned

with dark wavy hair, his head finely poised, his hand the admiration of sculptors." At Cambridge he made one of a little group of students known among their friends as the 'Apostles,' almost all of whom became famous in after years. They met in each others rooms for the reading of essays and for discussion, and they formed friendships which lasted throughout their lives.

In 1830 Tennyson published another volume called *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical,* and in 1832 a third which contained some of the poems by which he is remembered to-day, e.g. *Œnone, The Palace of Art, A Dream of Fair Women.* He left College in 1831, and returned to Somersby. In October 1833, Arthur Hallam, who had been his closest friend at Cambridge, and his loyal comrade and adviser ever since, died suddenly at Vienna. The blow fell crushingly on Tennyson, and for years this loss darkened his life. In the sad winter days that followed he began to write the fragments of mournful verse that gradually developed into that noble tribute to his dead friend—the poem of *In Memoriam.*

> Where is the voice I loved ? Ah, where
> Is that dear hand that I would press ?
> Lo ! the broad heavens cold and bare,
> The stars that know not my distress.
>
> . . . . .
>
> The vapour labours up the sky,
> Uncertain forms are darkly moved !
> Larger than human passes by
> The shadow of the man I loved,
> And clasps his hands, as one that prays !

For ten years after the death of Arthur Hallam Tennyson published nothing. The first four years he spent quietly at Somersby Rectory, which still remained the home of the Tennysons, though the father had died in 1831. From time to time he made an expedition to London, to see his old friends, and in 1835 he visited the Lake Country. But such jaunts were rare ; for he was poor, and his poetical work had so far brought in nothing save the memorable twenty pounds. Moreover he was working hard at his poems, polishing and almost rewriting some of those already published, and

Lord Tennyson

composing new ones. "From the letters of that time," his son wrote, in the *Memoir* published in 1897, "I gather that there was a strong current of depreciation of my father in certain literary quarters. However, he kept up his courage, profited by friendly and unfriendly criticism, and in silence, obscurity and solitude, perfected his art."

Edward Fitzgerald tells us that in 1835 when he, James Spedding (another famous member of the Cambridge group) and Tennyson were in the Lake District together, Tennyson used, in the evenings, to take out a 'little red book' of manuscript and read to his two friends the poems he had lately written. These included the *Morte d'Arthur*, *The Day Dream*, *The Lord of Burleigh*, *Dora*, and *The Gardener's Daughter*. Of the *Morte d'Arthur* he had previously written to Spedding that he thought it was the "best thing I have managed lately," and it is interesting to us as being the first instalment of the *Idylls of the King*. No idea of the larger work seems to have yet occurred to Tennyson, although *Sir Galahad*, written about the same time shows that the story of King Arthur and his knights was already beginning to occupy his thoughts.

In 1837 the Tennysons left Somersby and took a house at High Beech, in Epping Forest. There, in his study, which "was not the top attic, according to his usual preference, but a large room over the dining-room, with a bay-window, red curtains, and a Clytie on a pedestal in the corner," Tennyson worked. Slowly the number of poems ready for publication increased. In 1840 the family left High Beech, and after a short stay at Tunbridge Wells, settled at Boxley, near Maidstone. Tennyson spent a great part of the year 1842 in London, and mixed freely with the 'Apostles,' many of whom had become noted men, and with others of the foremost in literature. Tennyson, when the mood was on him, was a most delightful companion. He was shy in general society, and he had much of the 'black blood' which he tells us was the inheritance of his race. This at times cast him into such terrible fits of depression as seriously affected his health. It prevented him from looking out on life with a calm and settled hopefulness,

and though he possessed the larger faith which could see, clear-eyed, beyond the enveloping cloud, and recognize the 'increasing purpose' that ran through the ages, yet he was often tormented by the apparent cruelty of the methods by which the progress of the race must be brought about. In his normal moods, however, he was cheerful enough, and capable of the wildest flights of mirth and nonsense. In 1842, some of the high spirits which, since the death of Arthur Hallam, he had lost, were coming back. "He used to do the sun coming out from a cloud, and retiring into one again, with a gradual opening and shutting of the eyes, and with a great fluffing up of his hair into full wig and elevation of cravat and collar; George IV in as comical and wonderful a way." Or he would give dramatic recitals from Shakespeare or Molière, or enact with grim humour Milton's "So started up in his foul shape the fiend," from the crouching of the toad to the explosion, "varying these performances with imitations of public men of the day." He became intimate with Carlyle, whose acquaintance he had made two years before, and the philosopher wrote, in a letter to his brother, a description of his new acquaintance. "A fine, large-featured, dim-eyed, bronze-coloured, shaggy-headed man is Alfred; dusty, smoky, free and easy; who swims, outwardly and inwardly, with great composure in an articulate element as of tranquil chaos and tobacco smoke; great now and then when he does emerge; a most restful, brotherly, solid-hearted man." Mrs. Carlyle describes him as "a very handsome man, and a noble-hearted one, with something of the gypsy in his appearance, which for me is perfectly charming."

During this stay in London the poems for the new volume were undergoing final revision. Fitzgerald tells of the meetings which took place in Spedding's Chambers at 60 Lincoln's Inn Fields. "The poems to be printed were nearly all, I think all, written out in a foolscap folio parchment bound blank book such as accounts are kept in (only not ruled), and which I used to call 'The Butcher's Book.' The poems were written in A. T.'s very fine hand (he once said, not thinking of himself,

that great men generally wrote 'terse' hands) toward one side of the large page; the unoccupied edges and corners being stript down for pipe-lights, taking care to save the MS., as A. T. once seriously observed. These pages of MS. from the Butcher's Book were one by one torn out for the printer, and when returned with the proofs were put in the fire. I reserved two or three of the leaves; and gave them to the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge."

The period of publication was a time of trial to the critical and sensitive poet, with his lofty ideal of what his work should be. "Poor Tennyson has got home some of his proof-sheets," writes Fitzgerald, "and now that his verses are in hard print he thinks them detestable." "But," he goes on, . . . "he will publish such a volume as has never been published since the time of Keats, and which, once published, will never be suffered to die. This is my prophesy, for I live before Posterity."

The prophecy was fulfilled. The two volumes of 1842 contained, besides the poems that have already been mentioned, others which are still held as among the greatest that our great Victorian Laureate ever wrote. Such are *The Talking Oak, Locksley Hall, The Two Voices, The Poet's Song, Ulysses* and *Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere.* Some of the poet's friends and critics—notably Edward Fitzgerald—held that he never again rose quite as high as he had done in these volumes. The reviews in the leading magazines were favourable, and the general public came gradually to appreciate the fine quality of the work put before them. Among the group of cultured literary men who were Tennyson's intimates or acquaintances there was only one opinion. "Truly," wrote Carlyle, "it is long since in any English book, Poetry or Prose, I have felt the pulse of a real man's heart as I do in this same." Dickens wrote to him as "a man whose writings enlist my whole heart and nature in admiration of their Truth and Beauty;" and the old poet and patron of poets, Samuel Rogers, declared that "few things, if any, have ever thrilled me so much as 'your two beautiful volumes.'"

Tennyson's reputation was secure, although his general popularity increased only very gradually. At first the poems brought a very small money return. There still seemed little prospect that he would ever obtain an adequate income from his works, and to do so was his ardent desire. Since 1836 he had been engaged to marry Miss Emily Sellwood, sister to his brother Charles's wife, and the marriage was only delayed through his lack of means. In 1843, by the failure of Dr. Allen's wood-carving company, he lost almost all his small capital. The disappointment threw him into one of his constitutional fits of despondency. He became really ill, and was induced by his family to try the hydropathic treatment at Cheltenham. While he was there came a letter from Sir Robert Peel, telling him that a pension of £200 had been conferred on him by the Crown. It was accepted, though with some hesitation. "Something in that word 'pension,'" wrote Tennyson to a friend, "sticks in my gizzard; it is only the name, and perhaps would smell 'sweeter' by some other. Well, I suppose I ought in a manner to be grateful."

In 1847 Tennyson published *The Princess*, and in 1850 *In Memoriam*. Both were well received, and their success brought the longed-for competence. In June 1850 Tennyson was married to Miss Sellwood at Shiplake Church, on the Thames. They lived for a short time in Sussex, and then for nearly three years at Twickenham. In November 1850, upon the death of Wordsworth, Tennyson was appointed Poet Laureate. In 1852 his son Hallam was born, and in 1854 a second son, Lionel. In 1853 Tennyson's circumstances had so far improved that he resolved on moving to a larger house in the country. He settled at last on a house at Farringford in the Isle of Wight. It was within sight and sound of the sea, and to the left rose the breezy, beautiful Downs. It was secluded enough to satisfy Tennyson's love of retirement, yet not too far from books and publishers. Here for forty years was his home, and here he wrote many of his most famous works.

The life at Farringford, as it is described in the *Memoir* of Tennyson, written by his eldest son, was ideally beautiful,

and cannot be told so well as in the words of one who took part in it. "My father and mother settled to a country life at once, looking after their little farm, and tending the poor and sick of the village. In the afternoons they swept up leaves, mowed the grass, gravelled the walks, and he built what he called a 'bower of rushes' in the kitchen garden. The primroses and snowdrops and other flowers were a constant delight, and he began a flower dictionary. He also bought spy-glasses through which he might watch the ways and movements of the birds in the ilexes, cedar- and fir-trees. Geology too he took up, and trudged out with the local geologist, Keeping, on many a long expedition. . . .

"If it was rainy or stormy, and we were kept indoors, he often built cities for us with bricks, or played battledore and shuttlecock; or sometimes he read Grimm's *Fairy Stories* or repeated ballads to us. . . . On feast days he would blow bubbles and then grow much excited over the 'gorgeous colours and landscapes, and the planets breaking off from their suns, and the single star becoming a double star,' which he saw in these bubbles; or if it were evening he would help us to act scenes from some well-known play. . . . My father was always interested in the imaginative views which we children took of our surroundings. Of these I may give one instance; how Lionel had been brought from his bed at night, wrapt in a blanket, to see the great comet, and suddenly awaking and looking out at the starry night, asked, 'Am I dead?'"

The house at Farringford was beautiful and homelike. It seemed, Lady Ritchie (daughter of Thackeray) tells us, "like a charmed palace, with green walls without, and speaking walls within. There hung Dante with his solemn nose and wreath; Italy gleamed over the doorways; friends' faces lined the passages, books filled the shelves, and a glow of crimson was everywhere; the oriel drawing-room window was full of green and golden leaves, of the sound of birds and of the distant sea."

The first poem written in the new home was *Maud*, Tennyson's own favourite among all his works. He wrote it, his son

says, " morning and evening, sitting in his hard, high-backed wooden chair in his little room at the top of the house. His 'sacred pipes,' as he called them, were half an hour after breakfast, and half an hour after dinner, when no one was allowed to be with him, for then his best thoughts came to him. As he made the different poems he would repeat or read them. The constant reading of the new poems aloud was the surest way of helping him to find out any defects they might possess. During his 'sacred half-hours' and his other working hours and even on the Downs, he would murmur his new passages or new lines as they came to him, a habit that had always been his since boyhood, and which had caused the Somersby cook to say, 'What is master Awlfred always a praying for ?' "

The Tennysons were so well pleased with Farringford that in 1853 Tennyson decided to buy it, and the " ivied home among the pine-trees " became his own. Early in the same year he began to work seriously at his *Idylls of the King*, the general plan of which had been for some time in his mind. He took up the story of King Arthur in the same spirit that Spenser had brought to it three hundred years before. " The generall end, therefore, of all the book is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline," the Elizabethan poet had said ; and his Victorian descendant spoke after the same fashion. King Arthur " is meant to be a man who spent himself in the cause of honour, duty and self-sacrifice, who felt and aspired with his nobler knights, though with a stronger and a clearer conscience than any of them, 'reverencing his conscience as his king.' 'There was no such perfect man since Adam,' as an old writer says." Tennyson's ideal knight of the nineteenth century naturally differs from Spenser's ideal knight of the sixteenth. The later poet has been severely blamed because he attributed to this old British king the ethical code and the manners of modern times. He produced thereby, say the critics, a fantastic and unreal work which has nothing of the spirit of the old mediæval stories, such as is to be found in Malory's great prose version of the Arthurian legend, and which loses interest as a modern poem

through its scene being laid in the far past. The criticism is to some extent a just one; yet the *Idylls* have a beauty and a value which such criticism cannot touch. The general idea on which they are based is a lofty and a noble one. "We needs must love the highest when we see it," and Tennyson here puts the 'highest' before us in such a lovely and attractive form, that it would be difficult indeed not to 'see' it. The workmanship of the poems is perfect—too perfect, some critics are inclined to think. "I am not sure," wrote Ruskin to Tennyson, "but I feel the art and finish in these poems a little more than I like to feel it. Yet I am not a fair judge quite, for I am so much of a realist as not by any possibility to interest myself much in an unreal subject, to feel it as I should, and the very sweetness and stateliness of the words strike me all the more as *pure* workmanship." But this objection cannot hold with reference to the great and inspired passages of which examples are to be found in almost every one of the *Idylls;* and instead of searching for faults in things so beautiful, we should do better to accept them in the spirit of Thackeray, as something for which we may rejoice and be thankful. "Here I have been," wrote the great novelist, "lying back in the chair and thinking of those delightful *Idylls*, my thoughts being turned to you; and what could I do but be grateful to that surprising genius which has made me so happy. Gold and purple and diamonds, I say, gentlemen, and glory and love and honour, and if you haven't given me all these, why should I be in such an ardour of gratitude? But I have had out of that dear book the greatest delight that has ever come to me since I was a young man."

Merlin and Vivien was finished by March 31, 1856, and *Geraint* and *Enid* begun on April 16. It was finished during an expedition to Wales toward the end of the summer. "The Usk murmurs by the windows," Tennyson wrote, "and I sit like King Arthur in Caerleon." On July 9, 1857, Mrs. Tennyson entered in her diary, "Alfred has brought me as a birthday present the first two lines he has made of *Guinevere* which might be the nucleus of a great poem." On March 8 she wrote,

"To-day he has written his song of *Too Late* and has said it to me;" and on March 15 "*Guinevere* is finally completed."

Toward the end of the summer of 1859 the first four Idylls were published. The book had an immediate success, ten thousand copies being sold in the first week of publication. Tennyson had at last become a popular poet.

No more of the *Idylls* were published for ten years. Tennyson hesitated about continuing them, "I have thought about it," he wrote in 1862, "but I dare not set to work for fear of failure and time lost." He was meditating whether he should or should not take up the story of the Holy Grail. "I doubt whether such a subject could be handled in these days without incurring a charge of irreverence." *The Holy Grail* was at last written "as if by a breath of inspiration"; and in 1869 was published the volume containing that poem and *The Coming of Arthur, Pelleas and Etarre* and *The Passing of Arthur. The Last Tournament* and *Gareth and Lynette* appeared in 1872; then, after an interval of thirteen years, came the last of the series, *Balin and Balan.*

The *Idylls* were dedicated to the Prince Consort in verses so beautiful, so tender, and so full of a just and wise appreciation of the great man who had gone that it was no wonder the Princess Royal wrote to Tennyson: "Surely it must give the Author satisfaction to think that his words have been drops of balm on the broken and loving hearts of the widowed Queen and her orphaned children." At the end of the *Idylls* comes an address *To the Queen,* which contains lines in which Tennyson tells something of his purpose and meaning in writing the poems.

> But thou, my Queen,
> Not for itself, but thro' thy living love
> For one to whom I made it o'er his grave
> Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
> New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul
> Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost,
> Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,
> And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still.

He ends with words of noble comfort in the troublous times that then seemed approaching.

Yet—if our slowly-grown
And crown'd Republic's crowning common-sense,
That saved her many times, not fail—their fears
Are morning shadows huger than the shapes
That cast them, not those gloomier which forego
The darkness of that battle in the West,
Where all of high and holy dies away.

During the next twelve years Tennyson occupied himself chiefly with a series of historical dramas in blank verse—*Harold*, *Becket*, *Queen Mary*, and some minor dramatic pieces—*The Falcon*, *The Cup* and *The Promise of May*. In 1874 he was raised to the peerage as Baron of Aldworth and Farringford, his seats in Sussex and in the Isle of Wight. In 1880 he published a volume of ballads containing among other pieces the famous *Revenge*. He continued to write up to the last year of his life, and in 1889, when he was eighty years old, produced *Crossing the Bar*, which has all the beauty and grace of the lyrics written when his powers were at their fullest. He died at Aldworth on October 6, 1892, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

CHAPTER LIV

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES: AURORA LEIGH

ONE day, in the year 1826, a schoolboy of fourteen passing along the streets of Camberwell toward his home, saw on a bookstall a second-hand copy of Shelley's *Queen Mab*, marked "Mr. Shelley's Atheistical Poem: very scarce." The boy had, by nature and by training, a lively interest in books, especially in those which were 'very scarce.' His father was an ardent book-lover, and the Camberwell house was filled with rare and curious volumes. But there was no poem by Mr. Shelley among them, and young Robert Browning's curiosity was aroused by the new name. He made eager inquiries among his friends concerning it, and learnt that Mr. Shelley was a young poet who had died four years before. Such scanty information could not content the eager, impetuous boy. He felt a strong sympathy with all young poets, for he himself had 'made up' verses even before he could write, and at the age of twelve had produced a manuscript volume of short poems for which his father had in vain tried to find a publisher. He entreated his mother to get him a copy of Shelley's works, and she was very willing to do so, but none of the Camberwell booksellers had heard even the name of the poet who is now so famous. At last Mrs. Browning obtained the address of the London firm where Shelley's works were on sale. She brought back to her son copies of the first edition of nearly all the poems of Shelley, except *The Cenci*, and she brought also, on the bookseller's recommendation, three volumes of the works of another unknown poet, John Keats.

Young Robert Browning took the poems and began to read

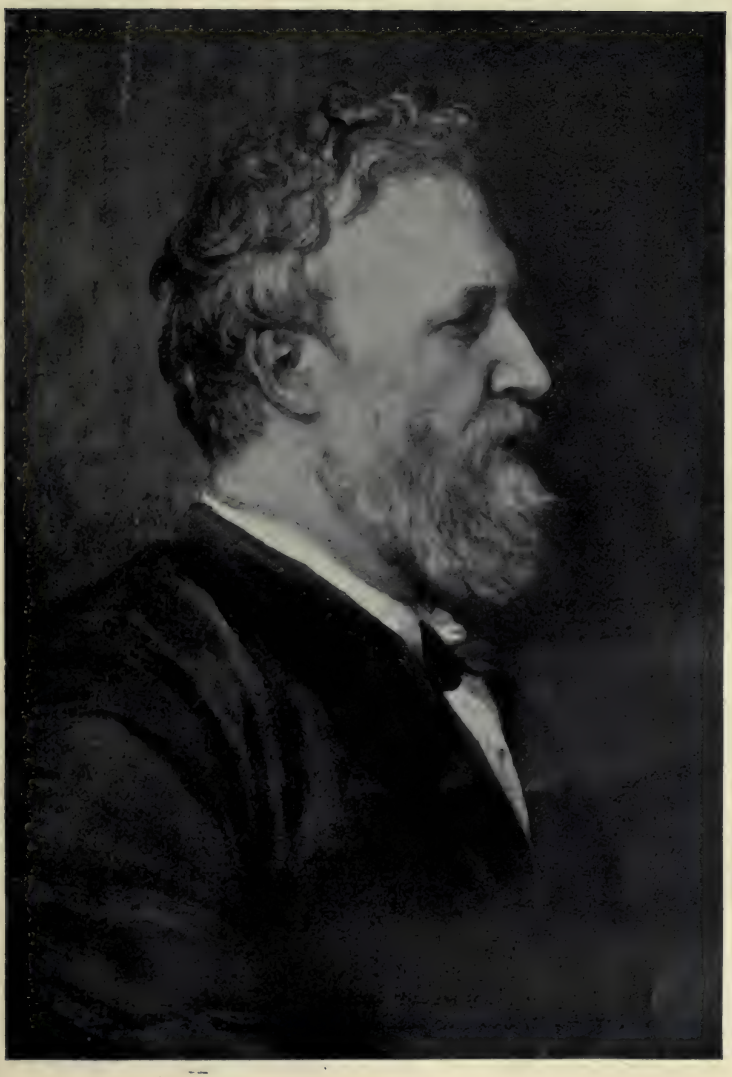
them with that keen anticipation of enjoyment natural in a lad whose pleasures had been mainly associated with books from the time that he and his father had played at Greeks and Trojans with a city of Troy made out of a pile of drawing-room chairs. But these books, he soon found, were like no others that he had read. The spirits of the two dead poets seemed to hover round him, so intensely did he realize their thoughts and emotions. Behind his father's house was a pleasant, old-fashioned garden, and as the boy walked there in the soft darkness of a May evening he heard a nightingale singing in a golden laburnum-tree and another answering from a ruddy copper beech in a garden close by. The conviction came to him that these were the spirits of Shelley and of Keats, called up by the passionate adoration of their new worshipper. No wonder that when, toward the end of his life, somebody said to him, "There is no romance now except in Italy," he answered, remembering the splendid dreams of the far-off days, "Ah, well, I should like to include poor old Camberwell."

It was Shelley and Keats who gave as it were the casting vote in the choice of young Robert Browning's profession. When the time came for a definite decision to be made he had long ago decided that he was to be a poet. His cultured, kindly father, who himself only just missed being a genius, recognized and exulted in Robert's unusual powers. He rejected at once an offer of a bank of England clerkship, such as he had held for many years, for his son, and suggested one of the learned professions. But when he saw that the young man's heart was wholly set on poetry, he met his wishes with the loving cordiality that was usual to him. It was long before Robert Browning received a penny for his poetry, and during all those years his father supported him with ready generosity.

We are told that when the decision was finally made the future poet set to work to prepare himself for his calling by reading through the whole of Johnson's Dictionary. We have no doubt that he enjoyed the study mightily, and gave to his

family and his friends an enraptured description of the beauties of this fascinating work. For Robert Browning had such an intense zest of living that he enjoyed things that might seem to the ordinary person tedious and dull. For him there was no sharply drawn line dividing the sublime from the commonplace. The young man who strode over Wimbledon Common, his head uplifted, his dark hair tossed by the wind, his grey eyes shining, reciting aloud grand passages from Isaiah—who stopped Carlyle when that great man was out riding, and, with a tremendous outpouring of eloquence, expressed his delighted appreciation of *Sartor Resartus* and other of the prophet's works—was deeply interested also in the fit of his lemon-coloured kid gloves and in the quality of the wine he drank at dinner. His robust, almost tempestuous enjoyment of life included small things as well as great.

In 1833 he published his first poem, *Pauline: A Fragment of a Confession*, the general plan of which is crude and extravagant, though there are some passages of great beauty. The poem is chiefly interesting now as showing the influence which Shelley and Keats had upon Browning's early years. In *Pauline* Shelley is addressed as the 'Sun-treader' and Keats as the 'Star.' The poem, which was published anonymously, attracted little notice. It was followed in 1835 by *Paracelsus*, which tells of the great medical scientist of the Middle Ages; in 1837 by *Strafford*, a drama which was produced at Covent Garden Theatre and met with moderate success; and in 1840 by *Sordello*, which is always quoted as a typical example of the 'obscurity' with which Browning is charged. A copy of this poem was sent to Carlyle, and it is said that he wrote back that Mrs. Carlyle had read it with much interest, and would be very glad if the author would tell her whether Sordello was a man or a city or a book. Many other similar stories are told about this unfortunate work to which Browning himself, we are told, in after years alluded as 'quite unintelligible.' The fault did not lie in any lack of powers of expression but rather in a richness and exuberance of imagination which



Robert Browning
G. F. Watts
Photo. W. A. Mansell & Co.

caused ideas to be crowded out by the quick rush of others that followed them, so that the poet in his eagerness had only time to express himself by a kind of shorthand in which a word became the symbol for a complete thought, and a dash stood for an explanatory sentence. It was all clear enough to him at the time, but to his readers who had no clue to the peculiar system of association which prevailed in his own mind, it was like trying to cross a brook where more than half the stepping-stones are under water, and those that remain visible are so eccentrically placed that they fail altogether to suggest the position of the hidden ones. The traveller prefers to fall ignominiously into the wet and the mud rather than make the attempt to cross by means of the exhausting leaps necessary to carry him to the other side, or by the slow process of tracking out the missing stones.

This fault of obscurity marks nearly all Robert Browning's works to a greater or a less degree. But as if to prove to us that it arose from no radical defect in poetic power, the poem that followed *Sordello* is almost entirely free from it. In 1841 came *Pippa Passes*. It was conceived, we are told, during one of the night rambles in which Browning sometimes indulged. A passion of pure love for his kind, such as is common to the warm and generous heart of youth, possessed him. He longed to serve and bless some among the crowd of his fellow-men who lay below, many of them, doubtless, in sore need of help. And as he thought there arose in his mind the idea of an influence exerted unconsciously and simply by the sheer force of the love and purity of one soul that passed by. The idea was embodied in the story of the little Italian peasant girl, who worked in the silk mills of Asolo, had one day's holiday in the year, and resolved to spend that day so as to gain from it all that it could possibly give.

> Oh, Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
> A mite of my twelve hours' treasure,
> The least of thy gazes or glances,
> (Be they grants thou art bound to or gifts above measure)
> One of thy choices or one of thy chances,
> (Be they tasks God imposed thee or freaks at thy pleasure)

—My Day, if I squander such labour or leisure,
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!
For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest
Me, who am only Pippa,—old-year's sorrow,
Cast off last night, will come again to-morrow:
Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow
Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's sorrow.

So the child talks on happily, and pleases herself by imagining herself to be each, in turn, of Asolo's "Four Happiest Ones." Then the fancy takes her that she will connect her day's holiday with these.

I will pass each, and see their happiness,
And envy none—being just as great, no doubt,
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they!

In this spirit she sets out, singing as she goes. She passes by each of the "Four Happiest Ones" at some critical moment in their history, and by her song unconsciously influences their fates. There are thus four stories in the poem, linked together by the fifth story of the little peasant girl. The keynote of the whole is struck in the shortest, yet the most beautiful of Pippa's songs.

The year's at the spring
The day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

Pippa Passes, like Browning's previous works, found no publisher ready to take the risks of its publication. Mr. Edward Moxon was approached, and in the course of negotiations offered to produce it, in pamphlet form, at a very trifling expense to the author. Browning at once accepted the offer, and it was arranged that a series of his poems should appear in this fashion. To the series he gave the name of *Bells and Pomegranates*. *Pippa Passes*, 1841, was followed in 1842 by *King Victor and King Charles*, a tragedy dealing with the Dukes of Savoy, 1720–1732. Number three contained, among other lyrics, the famous *Cavalier Tunes* and *The Pied Piper of*

Hamelin. We will quote one verse of the first of the *Cavalier Lyrics* to show Browning as a master of plain, straightforward gallantly stepping verse :

> Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
> Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing ;
> And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
> And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
> Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
> Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

The Pied Piper was written originally for the eldest son of Mr. Macready, the famous actor. The child was confined to the house by illness, and Browning sent him the poem that he might amuse himself by drawing illustrations to, as well as by reading it. The poet's sister found, long after, the illustrations that Willy Macready had sent to his friend, with a touching little letter. The poem is now the property of children in general, and is too well known for any quotations from it to be needed here.

The year 1843 saw the publication of numbers four and five of *Bells and Pomegranates—The Return of the Druses*, and *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, two tragedies. In 1844 came *Colombes' Birthday*, and in 1845 *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* This number contained some of Browning's finest work. There is, for instance, the exquisite *Home Thoughts, from Abroad* ("Oh, to be in England now that April's there") ; the spirited "*How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*," as well as longer works like *Saul* and *The Flight of the Duchess*. In 1846 came the eighth and last, *Luria*, and *A Soul's Tragedy*. With this number Browning offered an explanation of the meaning of the title *Bells and Pomegranates*, that he had given to his series. "I meant by that title," he says, "to indicate an endeavour toward something like an alternation or mixture, of music with discoursing, sound with sense, poetry with thought ; which looks too ambitious, thus expressed, so the symbol was preferred." *Pippa Passes*, Browning's biographer tells us, "was priced first at sixpence ; then, the sale being inconsiderable, at a shilling, which greatly encouraged the sale ; and so, slowly, up to half-a-crown, at which the price of each number finally rested."

The year in which the last number of *Bells and Pomegranates* was published was the most eventful one of Robert Browning's life. It was the year of his marriage with Miss Elizabeth Barrett, and there followed fifteen years, spent mostly in Italy, during which the poet was partly lost in the husband. The quantity of work done during that period was small, though its quality was of the very finest.

The story of his marriage must be briefly told.

In 1839 Robert Browning had made the acquaintance of Mr. John Kenyon, an old school-fellow of his father. This gentleman was a cousin of Elizabeth Barrett, and, as was Browning himself, a great admirer of her poetry. From Mr. Kenyon Browning learnt something of Miss Barrett's history. She had been a healthy, active girl, but at the age of fifteen had injured her spine by a fall. The loss of her elder brother, who was drowned at Torquay within sight of the house where she was staying, brought on an illness which, combined with the effects of the accident, made of her a confirmed invalid. She came back to London and for years she lived in her father's house, confined to a large, darkened room, and treated by all around her as one doomed to an early death. Her father, though kind and indulgent in the extreme, was of a peculiar temperament, and, once having made up his mind that his daughter was to be an invalid for life, resented, as almost impious, any suggestion that means should be tried for her restoration to health. He wept over her and prayed over her abundantly, and listened with a kind of mournful satisfaction to the doctors, who assured him that there was no hope of her recovery. There is little wonder that the invalid herself, as well as the other members of the family, adopted the same view. The surprising thing is that Miss Barrett did not allow herself to be made morbid or self-pitying by the very unhealthy atmosphere in which she lived. From her childhood she had been fond of learning, and had specially delighted in poetry. "Most of my events and nearly all my intense pleasures," she wrote in 1843, "have passed in my *thoughts*. I wrote verses—as I daresay many have done who never wrote

Mrs. Browning

Photo. Emery Walker Ltd.

any poems—very early; at eight years old and earlier. But, what is less common, the early fancy turned into a will, and remained with me, and from that day to this poetry has been a distinct object with me—an object to read, think and live for." In her sick-room she bravely set herself to study and to write. "I have *worked* at poetry," she says, "it has not been with me reverie, but art. As the physician and lawyer work at their several professions, so have I, and so do I, apply to mine." The result was that the woman who believed herself to be dying, sent out from her sick-room verse of such strong and vivid quality as roused Robert Browning to rapturous admiration. Mr. Kenyon, who was one of the few visitors admitted to the sacredly guarded chamber, and was called by Miss Barrett her "fairy godfather," saw how much his two favourites had in common. In 1844 he gave to Robert Browning, who had just returned from a stay in Italy, a copy of Miss Barrett's latest volume, which contained, among other poems, *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*. The reference to himself in this poem

> There, obedient to her praying did I read aloud the poems,
> . . . From Browning some "Pomegranate," which, if cut deep down the middle,
> Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity—

raised his admiration to something of a more personal feeling, and he eagerly responded to Mr. Kenyon's suggestion that he should write to Miss Barrett. She answered, and they exchanged interesting letters, chiefly on literary subjects, for some months. Then Browning proposed that he should call at her father's house and see her. The suggestion seems to have startled, and almost frightened Miss Barrett. She wrote a decided though not an unkind refusal. "There is nothing to see in me; nor to hear in me. I never learned to talk as you do in London; although I can admire that brightness of carved speech in Mr. Kenyon and others. If my poetry is worth anything to any eye, it is the flower of me. I have lived most and been most happy in it, and so it has all my colours; the rest of me is nothing but a root, fit for the ground and dark." But Robert Browning was not easily turned from a purpose

he had once conceived. He managed to overcome Miss Barrett's objections, and in May 1845, he paid his visit. He at once fell in love with Miss Barrett, and with characteristic promptness and directness, he soon afterward made his proposal of marriage. To all the Barrett household the idea seemed preposterous, almost wicked. The invalid had so long been looked upon as one set apart and devoted to an early death, that her sisters, when they heard Robert Browning calmly talking about a journey to Italy and an active, happy life there, held their breath in astounded consternation. To Mr. Barrett his daughters dared say nothing, and Robert Browning knew that to ask his consent would be to frustrate the whole plan. He persevered, however, in his proposals. He believed that once out of the morbid, unhealthy atmosphere in which she had lived so long, Miss Barrett would improve, and he was willing to take the risk, great as it was, that was involved in bringing about the change. Little by little he won his way. Miss Barrett was brought to consent to a secret marriage. On September 12, 1846, she became Mrs. Browning, and the two started for Italy.

Mrs. Browning's story of her courtship and marriage is told with wonderful beauty and passion in her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (which were, of course, not from the Portuguese at all). We will quote the first :

> I thought once how Theocritus had sung
> Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
> Who each one in a gracious hand appears
> To bear a gift for mortals, old or young :
> And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
> I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
> The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
> Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
> A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
> So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
> Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair ;
> And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—
> "Guess now who holds thee !"—"Death," I said. But, there,
> The silver answer rang,—"Not Death, but Love."

Robert Browning's confidence was justified. When the first shock was over his wife soon began to show signs of improve-

ment, and before long was leading the ordinary life of a normal human being. He watched over her with a tender devotion that absorbed almost all his thoughts and energies. They wandered from one Italian city to another, and went on expeditions that it would have frightened Mrs. Browning to think of a year before. In August 1847 she wrote an account of a visit to the monks of Vallombrossa. "Such scenery, such hills, such a sea of hills looking alive among the clouds—which rolled, it was difficult to discern. Such fine woods, supernaturally silent, with the ground black as ink. There were eagles there too, and there was no road. Robert went on horseback, and Wilson (the maid) and I were drawn on a sledge—(i.e. an old hamper, a basket wine hamper—without a wheel). Think of my travelling in those wild places at four o'clock in the morning! a little frightened, dreadfully tired, but in an ecstasy of admiration." This was a change, indeed, from the gloomy, luxurious, darkened chamber of August 1846. At the end of another year she was still writing from Florence. "I am quite well again and strong. Robert and I go out often after tea in a wandering walk to sit in the Loggia and look at the Perseus, or, better still, at the divine sunsets on the Arno, turning it to pure gold under the bridges. After more than twenty months of marriage, we are happier than ever."

In March 1849 a little son was born to them. Mrs. Browning made at this time one more effort at reconciliation with her father, but this letter, as previous ones had been, was returned unopened. "I have nothing to say against the young man," Mr. Barrett said to Mr. Kenyon, who remonstrated with him concerning his harsh conduct, "but my daughter should have been thinking of another world." And he could not forgive her for being well and happy in this.

In 1855 Browning published a collection of fifty poems under the title of *Men and Women*. In this volume is to be found much of his best work. The inspiration which had come to him through his happy marriage and through the life he had led in the beautiful country he loved, glorified his poems, and

softened what in his previous work had sometimes verged on roughness. In 1855 the Brownings came to England, where they remained for some time, making friends with Tennyson and Ruskin and other notable people. At the end of the year they were in Paris, settled for the winter. It is here that we first hear of Mrs. Browning's poem, *Aurora Leigh*, and of the way in which it was written. "She wrote in pencil," we are told, "on scraps of paper, as she lay on the sofa in her sitting-room, open to interruption from chance visitors, or from her little omnipresent son; simply hiding the paper beside her if anyone came in, and taking it up again when she was free." Perhaps this is why *Aurora Leigh* is so full of inequalities. Noble and lofty passages stand side by side with those that are weak and inflated, and the drop from the sublime to the ridiculous is sometimes so narrowly escaped that the reader feels conscious of the shock. The pure and high tone of the poem is unmistakable. Robert Browning admired it with all his heart. He believed his wife's work to be far superior to his own, and looked up to her as to a great poet.

Aurora Leigh was published in 1856. It was dedicated to John Kenyon, who had been such a good friend to both Mrs. Browning and her husband, and who died later in the same year, leaving to each of them considerable legacies. The next five years saw no work of importance done by either the husband or the wife. They were now abundantly supplied with means for the life they loved. They wandered about Italy, leading an idyllic life filled with the delights that beautiful scenery, literature, pictures, music, and the society of some of the most eminent men and women of the day could give. All went well until the opening of the year 1861. Then Mrs. Browning's health, which had been so almost miraculously restored to her, began to fail. As the spring months passed she declined rapidly. In May her favourite sister died in England, and a little later came the news of the death of Cavour, the famous Italian statesman in whose work for the regeneration of his country Mrs. Browning was passionately interested. These two sorrows struck hard at her failing forces, and in June 1861 she died.

Robert Browning was left alone. The ideal and perfect union of fifteen years was at an end. The extent of his loss and of his grief we cannot attempt to estimate. After the first weeks of wild mourning he came back to England and settled in London that he might be near his father and sister. In time he resumed his old social habits and became once more a familiar figure in London society. In 1864 he published a collection of poems called *Dramatis Personæ*, some of which had been written before his wife's death. For the next four years he was occupied with the composition of *The Ring and the Book*, a poem extending to nearly twenty-five thousand lines. It is founded on the account of a Roman murder case which Browning read in a 'square old yellow Book' that he picked up on a bookstall in Rome, and tells the whole story twelve several times, each time from the point of view of one of the persons concerned. It was through this book that the fame, which had been so long denied him, came at last. During the years he had spent abroad he had been almost forgotten by the public in England. During one entire six months of the period not one copy of any of his works had been sold. But now popularity came in a flood-tide, when the poet was fifty-seven years old. His mother, his wife, and his father, those who would most have rejoiced in his fame, were dead. There were left to him only his sister, and his son.

His triumph, now that it had come, was complete. A crowd of worshippers gathered round him. Browning Societies were formed for the study of his works. The Universities offered him their highest honours. He took his success with simple and genuine pleasure that he had no thought of hiding. His creative power showed no sign of diminished vigour, though the music of his verse was failing. In his later works the psychological element became somewhat unduly prominent, and the obscurity which had marked his early works returned, with some lapses into coarse and rough phrasing. But he wrote with almost undiminished energy, and the last volume of his poems, *Asolando : Fancies and Facts*, was published on the day of his death, December 12, 1889.

CHAPTER LV

THYRSIS: CULTURE AND ANARCHY

THACKERAY, Tennyson, and their friends 'the Apostles,' are in some sense the representatives in Victorian literature of the University of Cambridge; for although her teaching had little influence upon them, and although they showed in after days little devotion to her ideals or to her memory, yet the social life of the place and the friendships formed there, affected their whole lives. But in a different and in a far more special sense Matthew Arnold is the representative of Oxford. His connexion with her lasted for many years, he was in perfect sympathy with her ideals and her policy, and was proud always to proclaim himself her loyal son. Two of his finest poems, *The Scholar Gipsy* and *Thyrsis*, describe the scenery round about Oxford, and in his prose works there are many references to the beautiful city, so venerable, so lovely, so serene, that, amid the turmoil and clamour of modern life, stands in her unchanging quiet beauty like an embodied aspiration toward the things tha' are not of time but of eternity. "Steeped in beauty as she lies," he says, "spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Ages, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection—to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side." The work which he here ascribes to Oxford is the work that Matthew Arnold himself was all his life trying to do: to draw men away from their constant care for material things and to fix their eyes on an ideal of beauty which, faithfully and joyfully pursued, should fill their lives with sweet-

ness and light. His aim was, in the main, the same as the aim of that other Oxford man, John Ruskin, who, while Arnold was still at college, was teaching the world in his *Modern Painters* that, "Ideas of beauty are among the noblest which can be presented to the human mind, invariably exalting and purifying it according to their degree." Arnold was both poet and prophet in his generation, and his influence though not as strongly or as quickly felt as that of Carlyle, Ruskin, Tennyson, and Browning, is a living force to-day, and shows signs of increasing in power as men feel more and more the need of help in meeting the difficulties and answering the questions that a highly complex modern civilization presents.

Matthew Arnold was the son of the famous Thomas Arnold, Head Master of Rugby, who is perhaps best remembered by the general public from the attractive and lifelike figure that Thomas Hughes has drawn of him in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. From Rugby Matthew Arnold went up to Oxford in 1841, when he was nineteen years old. In those days reform had not yet touched Oxford. The classics still held their place as the chief subject of study and the University still turned out those fine classical scholars of whom Matthew Arnold was a typical example. The clause which directed that all undergraduates must subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles was still in force, and so, theoretically, Oxford was exclusively Church of England. But in reality there was little unanimity among her members and much of their time was taken up, we are told, in discussions as to which was the true Church and who were its apostles. The great Tractarian movement was at its height. Newman was preaching to crowds of excited undergraduates at the University Church of St. Mary's, and his sweet and winning personality was helping to gain for him a band of devoted disciples. The *Tracts for the Times*, in which the principles of the High Church movement were set forward, were moving Oxford profoundly, and stirring the world outside. James Anthony Froude, the historian, and John Keble, the author of *The Christian Year* were among the leaders of the movement.

Into this heated atmosphere came the young Matthew Arnold. He was from the beginning opposed to Tractarianism, and Newman seems to have made little impression upon him. Of the details of the points of contention between the two parties he took little heed, though he was keenly interested, then and throughout his life in the broad general principles of religion and in the criticism and interpretation of the Bible.

We do not know very much about Arnold's student life at Oxford. In 1843 he won the Newdigate prize with a poem on Cromwell, and he was an active member of a small debating society called 'the Decade,' whose members "fought to the stumps of their intellects" on questions that interested them. His chief friends among students of his own standing were John Duke Coleridge, afterward Lord Chief Justice of England, and John Campbell Shairp, afterward Principal of St. Andrews. But his chosen and best-loved companion was Arthur Hugh Clough, who was four years older than Matthew Arnold, and a Fellow of Oriel. Clough had been Dr. Arnold's favourite pupil at Rugby and was strongly attached to his old master. The doctor's death in 1842 was perhaps even a greater blow to Clough than it was to his own son. The two drew together over this common sorrow, and although, after their college days they rarely met, the affectionate friendship between them remained unbroken until Clough's death in 1861. *Thyrsis*, the elegy which Arnold wrote in memory of his friend, is, in the opinion of many critics, his best poem. It is worthy of a place in the front rank of elegiac poems where stand Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais* and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. But it is not only an elegy, it is also a piece of autobiography. It tells us something of what Arnold was in those early days, and of what he felt for Oxford and how it entered into his life. His deep love for the old familiar scenes is simply and touchingly shown.

> Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
> Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
> The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
> The signal elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
> The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames?

Matthew Arnold
G. F. Watts
Photo. Fredk. Hollyer, London

This winter-eve is warm,
Humid the air ! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers !
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night !—
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
Once passed I blindfold here at any hour ;
Now seldom come I since I came with him.

He goes on to lament that " Thyrsis of his own will went away " from " our happy ground " into the world outside where storms were raging. " He could not wait their passing, he is dead." The cuckoo will come again in " the sweet spring days, but Thyrsis will be seen no more." " Let me," says his mourning friend,

Give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill !
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power ?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries.
I know these slopes ; who knows them if not I ? "

But Thyrsis is gone

And me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields ! yet will I not despair.

He will seek that " fugitive and gracious light " that " does not come with houses or with gold," and is not " bought and sold in the world's market."

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound ;
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour !
Men gave thee nothing ; but this happy quest,
If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime !
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

To Arnold the ' haunt beloved ' yielded ' a virtue ' to the very end of his life. When he wrote *Thyrsis* he was over

forty years old. He had published several small volumes of poetry, and was gaining, though slowly, a reputation among thoughtful, cultured men. For ten years he had held a post as Government Inspector of Schools, and was a recognized authority on education. His passionate love for Oxford had never waned, and Oxford had recognized his loyalty by electing him to its Professorship of Poetry. Once more he was in close touch with his beloved University, and he worked happily in her service for two successive periods of five years each. His lectures were afterward published, and form an important part of his prose writings. By this time the reaction against Tractarianism had set in, and Arnold's full sympathy went with its leaders. His sunny, genial nature enabled him to conduct a controversy without bitterness, and he did a great deal toward introducing a more urbane tone into controversial literature. The great political and religious leaders on both sides respected him; he became familiar with the men of the day foremost in literature and learning. Meanwhile, although he still wrote poetry, his growing interest in politics, education and social questions led him to try to make his views known in prose. His *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) is the culmination of a series of attacks that he had made on the vulgar and sordid ideals that govern the lives of middle-class Englishmen. He begins by referring to the scornful fashion in which various leading men of the day had referred to the 'culture' which he had advocated as an elevating and transforming influence. The *Daily Telegraph*, he says, has called him "an elegant Jeremiah" because he has doubted whether Reform Bills and the Repeal of the Corn Laws will do much toward making men's lives sweeter or happier. It is evident, he says, that his critics attach to the word 'culture' a meaning different from that which he has in mind, and he therefore proceeds to give his conception of it. In his Preface to the book he has defined culture as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world," and on this he enlarges. "It moves," he says, "by

the force not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. . . . There is no better motto which it can have than these words of Bishop Wilson : ' To make reason and the will of God prevail.' " This forms the text of his whole discourse. He shows how far the Englishman's ideal of " doing as one likes " falls below this aspiration ; he points out how reason would dictate a complete and harmonious development of all man's powers, instead of laying undue stress upon any one phase—physical, intellectual or spiritual. Culture, he says, unites the two noblest of things, sweetness and light. Swift in his *Battle of the Books* had used this phrase in reference to bees, who make both honey and wax. Mr. Arnold borrowed it and it has become specialized for the purpose in which he employed it ever since. In the same way he has given us, in his chapter on the three classes of society, two terms which still retain the new and special significance which he applied to them. The middle-class he calls the " Philistines." He had previously used the word in his *Essay on Heinrich Heine*. " *Philistinism!* —we have not the expression in English. Perhaps we have not the word because we have so much of the thing. . . . The French have adopted the term *épicier* (grocer), to designate the sort of being whom the Germans designate by the term Philistine ; but the French term—besides that it casts a slur upon a respectable class, composed of living and susceptible members, while the original Philistines are dead and buried long ago—is really, I think, in itself much less apt and expressive than the German term. Efforts have been made to obtain in English some term equivalent to Philister or *épicier* ; Mr. Carlyle has made several such efforts : ' respectability with its thousand gigs,' he says ; well, the occupant of every one of these gigs is, Mr. Carlyle means, a Philistine. However, this word *respectable* is far too valuable a word to be thus perverted from its proper meaning ; if the English are ever to have a word for the thing we are speaking of—and so prodigious are the changes which the modern spirit is introducing, that even we English shall, perhaps, one day come to want such

a word—I think we had much better take the term *Philistine* itself." This term *Philistine*, according to Mr. Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy*, "gives the notion of something particularly stiff-necked and perverse in the resistance to light and its children; and therein it specially suits our middle class, who not only do not pursue sweetness and light, but who even prefer to them that sort of machinery of business, chapels, tea-meetings, and addresses from Mr. Murphy (a Birmingham lecturer of the day), which makes up the dismal and illiberal life on which I have so often touched."

The upper classes or the aristocracy Mr. Arnold calls *The Barbarians* because, like the barbarians "who reinvigorated and renewed our worn-out Europe," they have in an extreme degree, the "passion for doing as one likes," and the passion for field sports. They have also the same "vigour, good looks, and fine complexions," the same "high spirit, choice manners and distinguished bearing," the same lack of soul. The working class, "which, raw and half-developed, has long lain half-hidden amidst its poverty and squalor, and is now issuing from its hiding place to assert an Englishman's heaven-born privilege of doing as he likes, and is beginning to perplex us by marching where it likes, meeting where it likes, bawling what it likes, breaking what it likes—to this vast residuum we may with great propriety give the name of *Populace*."

The last term is not a particularly happy one, but *Barbarians* and *Philistines* have, ever since *Culture and Anarchy* was published, been used to denote the two classes to which Matthew Arnold applied them. This point of nomenclature being settled, he proceeds to address himself particularly to the *Philistines*. It is, he says, the class to which he himself belongs, and his attention has naturally been concentrated on it; it "has been, besides, the great power of our day, and has had its praises sung by all speakers and newspapers." In words whose light and playful irony does not hide the intense feeling underlying them, he warns this triumphant middle class, so justly proud of the great things it has achieved, so bent on using its powers to gain still more notable victories, of the

danger which lies in a smug self-satisfaction. He urges them to make an effort to become more broad-minded, more liberal in their views, to let reason, not prejudice, govern their actions, to forsake anarchy and 'doing as one likes,' for culture and a wide, enlightened submission to the laws which have been established by the best thought of all ages. "The true business of the friends of culture is . . . to spread the belief in right reason and in a firm intelligible law of things, and to get men to try, in preference to staunchly acting with imperfect knowledge, to obtain some sounder basis of knowledge on which to act."

It is noticeable that, in *Culture and Anarchy*, as in other of his works, Matthew Arnold goes lovingly back to the teaching of his own old University, and dwells with intense satisfaction upon the thought that he is at one with her in his ideals and in his aims. "Oxford, the Oxford of the past, has many faults; and she has heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world. Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth—the truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection. When I insist on this, I am all in the faith and tradition of Oxford, I say boldly that this our sentiment for beauty and sweetness, our sentiment against hideousness and rawness, has been at the bottom of our attachment to so many beaten causes, of our opposition to so many triumphant movements. And the sentiment is true, and has never been wholly defeated, and has shown its power even in its defeat. We have not won our political battles, we have not carried our main points, we have not stopped our adversaries' advance, we have not marched victoriously with the modern world; but we have told silently upon the mind of the country, we have prepared currents of feeling which sap our adversaries' position when it seems gained, we have kept up our own communications with the future. . . . It is in this manner that the sentiment of Oxford for beauty and sweetness conquers, and in this manner long may it continue to conquer."

After 1867 Matthew Arnold wrote little poetry. He wrote various essays which added greatly to his fame as a prose writer, and he worked strenuously in the cause of education. He held his post as Inspector of Schools until April 1886, thus completing a term of thirty-five years. In the schools his courteous and kindly manner caused him to be regarded as a friend rather than as the awe-inspiring, omnipotent being of inspectorial legend. No one trembled when the tall, dignified, black-haired gentleman came into the room, and even the single eye-glass that sometimes misled the world outside, and caused it to credit Mr. Arnold with 'superciliousness' could not hide from the more discerning children the kindly light of his blue eyes. He was very proud of the compliment that a teacher had once paid him in saying that he "was always gentle and patient with the children," and the intense feeling which the sight of the neglected little ones in some of the schools aroused within him appears in several of his writings.

By his own family and by his intimate friends Matthew Arnold was greatly beloved. As a public man he made no enemies; and this, when we remember that he constantly wrote on subjects upon which popular feeling ran high, is a great tribute to the genial urbanity which even in the stress of conflict, did not desert him. His wit, as Mr. Herbert Paul says, had plenty of salt, but little pepper in it. He was essentially, and in all respects, a gentleman.

In April 1888 he travelled to Liverpool to meet his daughter who was returning from America. On the 15th he ran to catch a tramcar, and died, as his father had done, quite suddenly of a latent affection of the heart. He was buried in the little church at Laleham, near to which his boyhood had been spent.

CHAPTER LVI

KIDNAPPED: CATRIONA

IN the year 1884 Robert Louis Stevenson, then thirty-four years old, and already noted as a writer, came to make his home for a time at Bournemouth. The winter usually drove him abroad, but he loved England dearly, and was tired of exile; he resolved, therefore, to try whether the kindly pine-scented air of Bournemouth would not bring the same comfort to his weak lungs as did the air of more southerly regions. He and his wife settled in a house which was a present from his father and was called "Skerryvore." The Stevenson family had been for generations lighthouse builders, and the lighthouse at Skerryvore was the crowning achievement of the career of Thomas Stevenson (the father). Robert, or Louis, as he was commonly called, had in his youth, felt a strong ambition to follow in the footsteps of his forbears, and make himself famous by planting some great beacon amid dangerous seas. But his physical strength was small, though his spirit was high; and there came a counter-ambition to draw his thoughts away from his first love. He became possessed with the desire for a literary career, and gave all his thoughts to preparing himself for it. He was scolded for being an idle boy because he spent his time scribbling and musing instead of doing his lessons, but he was, really, very busy. He forgot all about lighthouse building in the fascinating attempt to imitate the style of such great writers as Hazlitt, Lamb, Browne, Defoe and Montaigne; and found thus playing the 'sedulous ape' as interesting a game as could be devised. The desire for a life of adventure and action, however, returned at intervals, and his books show how fully he understood and

entered into the delights of that free, roving existence, full of danger and hardship, which could never be his. Early in his life he developed a serious affection of the lungs; and so, as has been said, we find him at the age of thirty-four, in the thick of the battle that he had fought for many years with such valiant cheerfulness, against a fatal disease. He had upheld his right to work even when the enemy had declared work to be impossible; had baffled and circumvented it in all manner of whimsical ways; had jumped up light-heartedly after attacks which it had deemed final and decisive; and had flourished in its face the trophies won by sheer pluck and daring in the deadly struggle. He had written essays, poems, stories, including the famous and inimitable *Treasure Island*. Such had been the life of Robert Louis Stevenson, and such it remained until the end.

During the three years spent at Bournemouth the fight was even harder than usual. For a great part of the time Stevenson was unable to leave the house. Yet his high spirits never deserted him, or if they did he let none of those around him know of the defection, but worked cheerily on. "Our drawing-room," he wrote, "is now a place so beautiful that it's like eating to sit in it. No other room is so lovely in the world; there I sit like an old Irish beggarman's cast-off bauchle in a palace throne-room. Incongruity never went so far; I blush for the figure I cut in such a bower." The 'figure' as described for us by his friends, is as gallant and personable a one as need be. A form, painfully thin, yet full of life and energy, whose eager, restless movements had always a wonderful grace; a spare, brown face, with eyes of deepest brown, set far apart, and shaded by brown hair—these things can be described so that we can form some idea of the outward man. But no words, so those who loved him say, can convey any sense of the charm which Robert Louis Stevenson exercised over all who came near him. Something of it is preserved in his works, and especially in his familiar essays and stories of personal experiences. No one surely could help loving the man who travelled "With a donkey in the Cevennes,"

Robert Louis Stevenson

Photo. Mansell & Co.

who suffered such humorous agonies from his Modestine's shortcomings, and who was so full and brimming over with the vagrant spirit of careless enjoyment which belongs to the true wanderer. There was no experience from which Stevenson could not extract some enjoyment. Even a sick man's three days' journey "Across the Plains" in a crowded emigrant train with companions who were offensive to every sense, was something to which memory could return with intensest pleasure. "I never was bored in my life," he once said; and this is perhaps one reason why he always charmed everybody else.

It is marvellous that work of which so much was done in pain and weariness, with only the indomitable will keeping the frail body to its task, should be so free from any suggestion of effort and should have such a delightful humorous undertone. At Bournemouth Stevenson finished, in the spring of 1885, in the intervals between a series of painful and prostrating attacks, the poems, so full of the true spirit of childhood, that make up *A Child's Garden of Verses*. He followed these by the story of *Prince Otto*, and by the weird and powerful *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, which was written in three days, under the stress of strong excitement. In April he had begun a story for boys, but this had been laid aside for a time. When the completion of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* allowed Stevenson to regain his normal mental state he turned to this story once more, and soon became absorbed in tracing the adventures of the hero, David Balfour, and his fascinating comrade the Jacobite adventurer, Alan Breck. "In one of my books," Stevenson wrote, "and in one only, the characters took the bit in their teeth, all at once they became detached from the flat paper, they turned their backs on me and walked off bodily, and from that time my task was stenographic—it was they who spoke, it was they who wrote the remainder of the story." The story thus written he called *Kidnapped: Being the Adventures of David Balfour*. "How he was kidnapped and cast away; his sufferings in a Desert Isle; his Journey in the West Highlands; his Acquaintance with Alan Breck

Stewart and other notorious Highland Jacobites; with all that he Suffered at the hands of his Uncle, Ebenezer Balfour of Shaws, falsely so-called; Written by Himself, and now set forth by Robert Louis Stevenson."

Kidnapped took five months to write, and before it was finished fresh trouble had come to its author. His father had died—the stern, loving, generous Scotch father, who had felt so deeply his son's desertion of the family calling for the frivolous trade of literature, and had suffered so much from his conviction that Robert was a ne'er-do-well, unworthy of the good stock from which he came. His son felt his death keenly, and mourned afresh over the years of estrangement, which, though they had been followed by complete reconciliation, could never be wiped out. Grief fought on the side of the enemy, and things went very hardly for poor Robert Louis Stevenson. He struggled on and tried to finish his book, though he wrote, he tells us, without interest and without inspiration. At last when he had brought his hero safely back from his Highland wanderings to Edinburgh, the story came to an abrupt end. He could write no more; the remainder of his plan could not then be carried out.

Kidnapped was published in *Young Folks*, and ran from May to July. Meanwhile its author was engaged in another desperate struggle with his lifelong enemy. Severe attacks of hæmorrhage of the lungs left him weak and exhausted, and it was not until the spring of 1886 that his condition began to improve. He was able, however, to take some interest in the fate of his book, which had been very well received. It is a real boy's tale, so full of exciting adventures and hair-breadth escapes and deeds of surpassing courage that at a first reading one is too interested to be conscious of the fine qualities that raise it above most books of its class—the quiet Scottish humour, so unobtrusive, yet so irresistible, the truth of even the slightest of its character sketches, the beauty of its language. By the end of 1886 it was clear that the Bournemouth experiment had failed, and that Stevenson must once more seek for health out of England. He went first to New York, and from

there to a sanatorium in the Adirondacks. Here he slowly improved, and with the first return of working power began to write a new story, *The Master of Ballantrae.* A plan for his future life was forming itself in his brain, and early in 1888 he took the first step toward its fulfilment by hiring a yacht for a cruise among the Pacific Islands. The death of his father, and the growing popularity of his works had made his circumstances easier ; and for three years he and his wife sailed about the Pacific, making stays of varying lengths at different islands, and looking out for a permanent home. "This climate ; these voyagings ; these landfalls at dawn ; new islands peaking from the morning bank ; new forested harbours ; new passing alarms of squalls and surf ; new interests of gentle natives—the whole tale of my life is better to me than any poem." So spoke the man whose zest of living no suffering and no disappointment could destroy. He was driven out of the land he loved, and to which he had clung so long as a chance of his being able to live in it remained ; but he went, not as to exile, but in a holiday spirit of enjoyment.

He decided at length to make his home in Samoa, a group of islands situated toward the centre of the South Pacific Ocean. On the largest of these, Upoli, which measures forty-five miles by eleven, he bought a piece of land. It was called Vailima, or the Five Waters, and lay between two streams. The western stream broadened out in one place into a great pool, arched with orange-trees, and a few hundred yards farther on it fell forty or fifty feet over the rocks. Behind it rose the forest-covered Vasa Mountains. The eastern stream, which was the chief river of the island, ran through a deep and beautiful valley. There was no road leading to Vailima, or any means of communication until Stevenson made a track to the nearest village. The house was built amid a grove of banyan-trees, and a rugged, narrow, winding path bordered by limes led up to it, "almost as if it was leading to Lyonesse, and you might see the head and shoulders of a giant looking in." It was a two-story house of dark green wood, with a red roof made of corrugated iron upon which the rain beat like thunder. Stevenson's study and bed-

room was called the "martin's nest room," and was made out of a part of the veranda, roofed in. One window looked out over the sea, the other over the Vasa Mountains. For furniture there was a plain deal table, a bedstead, two chairs, and bookcases. Here he worked hard all the morning, rising at six, and having his breakfast served to him by one of the silent, barefooted native servants, who soon learnt to adore their new master—known in the island as "Tusitala." [1] "The morning is, ah, such a morning as you have never seen," he wrote to one of his friends in England, "heaven upon earth for sweetness, freshness, depth upon depth of unimaginable colour and a huge silence broken at this moment only by the far-away murmur of the Pacific, and the rich piping of a single bird."

Stevenson soon established a sort of feudal rule on the island. The natives looked up to him with reverence and brought to him all their disputes for settlement. He worked really hard for the well-being of his little principality, and was rewarded by the gratitude and devotion of those whom he served. In the pure soft air of Samoa he regained his health. He took long walks over the island, and interested himself in the cultivation of his estate, working with glee beside his willing servants.

In 1892 he took up the unfinished history of David Balfour, and wrote a sequel to *Kidnapped*. In this volume the heroine appears for the first time, and gives her name, Catriona, as its title. *Catriona*, being Memoirs of the Further Adventures of David Balfour at Home and Abroad. In which is set forward his Misfortunes anent the Appin Murder; his Troubles with Lord Advocate Grant; Captivity on the Bass Rock; Journey into Holland and France; and singular relations with James More Drummond or MacGregor, a son of the notorious Rob Roy, and his daughter Catriona. Like most sequels it perhaps falls a little below the original work, but Catriona herself is the most charming of Scottish lasses, and David Balfour as a young man is no less interesting than David Balfour as a boy.

Stevenson's death came quite suddenly in 1894. On December 3 he had been working all the morning at his book

[1] "Teller of Tales"

Weir of Hermiston, and in the afternoon was sitting in the veranda talking to his wife. Suddenly he put his hands to his head, cried out " What's that ? " and fell to the ground. He remained unconscious until a little past nine in the evening, when he died. He was buried among the Samoan mountains and was carried to his grave by the natives, who loved, and mourned for him.

" Nothing more picturesque can be imagined than the narrow ledge that forms the summit of Vasa, a place no wider than a room, and flat as a table. On either side the land descends precipitately ; in front lies the vast ocean and the surge-swept reefs ; to the right and left green mountains rise, densely covered with primeval forest." Here Robert Louis Stevenson lies, and on his grave are two inscriptions, First, in Samoan, the words, " The Tomb of Tusitala," and the verse from the Book of Ruth, beginning, " Whither thou goest, I will go." Then, in English, the name, age and date, and his own " Requiem."

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
  And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me :
Here he lies where he longed to be ;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
  And the hunter home from the hill.

INDEX

A man's a man for a' that, 393
Abbot, The, 454
Abbotsford, Sir Walter Scott settles at, 453, 454
Absalom and Achitophel, 248–54
Across the Plains, 567
Acting companies, 125–26
Adam, in *As You Like It*, 166
Adam Bede, 511
Addison, Joseph, and *The Tatler*, 272–74; early life, 272–73; and *The Spectator*, 275–81; and Sir Roger de Coverley, 277; *Cato*, 281; marriage, 281; death, 282; Pope and, 283, 285; and *The Rape of the Lock*, 285; and Swift, 306
Adonais, by Shelley, 427, 439; referred to, 558
Advancement of Learning, The, 199–204
Ae fond kiss, 393
Æolian Harp, The, by Coleridge, 403
Æsop's Fables, Caxton's edition of, 102
Agnes Grey, 496, 498
Aidan, 27
Albert of Aix, Mandeville's indebtedness, to, 97
Albinus of Canterbury, and Bede, 42
Alchemist, The, 207, 208–11
Aldgate, Chaucer living at, 82, 84
Alexander, Romance of, 49
Alfred the Great, 16; procures copies of Cædmon's work, 30; translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, 39; succeeds to the throne, 46; and the *English Chronicle*, 46, 47; introduces teachers from the Continent, 46; translation of parts of the Bible, 90
All's Well that Ends Well, 167
Alleyn, Edward, actor, 138
Altar, The, 219
Amelia, 332
Ananias, in *The Alchemist*, 209–10
Ancient Mariner, The, 405, 406, 410
Anglicanism, and literature of the early sixteenth century, 195; and George Herbert and Ferrar, 221
Anglo-Saxon metre, 15
Anglo-Saxon period, 15–48
Anne of Geierstein, 455
Annus Mirabilis, 247, 248
Anthology, the first English, 38
Antiquary, The, 454
Apollo Room, the, 212
Apostles, the Cambridge, 534, 556
Arblay, d', Fanny, *see* Burney, Fanny
Arbuthnot, John, 309
Arcades, by Milton, 237
Arcadia, Sidney's, 128, 324
Arden, Forest of, 154, 165
Ariel, to Miranda take, 427
Ariel, in *The Tempest*, 170
Armour, Jean, and Burns, 389, 392
Arnold, Matthew, life and works, 556–64; at Oxford, 557; and Tractarianism, 558, 560; and Clough, 558; *Thyrsis*, 558–59; official appointments, prose writings, 560; on the Philistines, 561–63; as School Inspector, 564; death, 564
Arnold, Thomas, 557, 558
Arthur, King, 49, 64; Milton proposes to write on, 238. See also *Idylls of the King*, *Morte d'Arthur*
Arthur, Prince, in Shakespeare's *King John*, 163
Arthurian romances, the, 64
As it fell upon a day, 174, 177
As You Like It, 164, 165–66, 176
Asolando: Fancies and Facts, 555
Astræa Redux, 247
Astrophel, Sidney's, 129–32; *Colin Clout's Mournful Ditty on Death*, 143
Aucassin and Nicolette, 79
Augustan Age, the, 265, 315, 319, 321
Augustine, St, influence on *Utopia*, 103
Auld Lang Syne, 393
Aurora Leigh, by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 554
Austen, Jane, 440–47; early writings, 441; at Bath, 443; at Southampton, 444; her critical faculty, 445; literary characteristics, 446; death, 447

Austen, Lady, Cowper and, 379–80
Authorized Version of the Bible, the, 118; influence on Milton, 235
Autumn, by James Thomson, 318
Ayre, the, 178
Azarias, 37

BACON, Francis, influenced by Sir Thomas More, 103; effect of Renaissance on, 195; works of, 197–204; his character, 197; and James I, 200, 202; becomes Lord Chancellor, 203; his fall and death, 204
Bacon, Sir Nicholas, 121
Bacon, Roger, legend of, 140
Bale, Bishop, 24
Balfour, David, in *Kidnapped*, 567, 570
Balin and Balan, by Tennyson, 542
Ballad on a Wedding, 214
Ballads, in the *English Chronicle*, 46, 47
Ballads of Policeman X, 473
Ballads of the Border, 448
Banks o' Doon, The, 393
Barbarians, Matthew Arnold's use of the term, 562
Bard, The, 319
Bard's Epitaph, The, by Burns, 394
Barnaby Rudge, 429
Barnefield, Richard, 174, 177
Barrett, Elizabeth, *see* Browning, Elizabeth Barrett
Barry Lyndon, 473
Bartholomew Fair, 206
Battle of the Books, The, 302; referred to, 561
Beatrice in *Much Ado*, and Euphuism, 124, 166
Beaumont, Francis, his lines on the Mermaid Tavern, 167
Becket, by Tennyson, 543
Bede, the Venerable, 15, 40–44; his last days, 43–44; his *Ecclesiastical History*, 39–44; quoted, 27; and the *English Chronicle*, 47
Bee, The, by Goldsmith, 348
Bells and Pomegranates, 548–50; meaning of the title, 549
Bell, Currer, Ellis, and Acton, 495, 498
Belsavage Playhouse, the, *Dr. Faustus* acted at, 138, 187
Bemerton, George Herbert at, 215
Benedict, in *Much Ado*, and Euphuism, 125
Beowulf, 17–25; historical foundation, 20; arrival in England, 21; Christian elements in, 22, 32; referred to, 61, 315
Betrothed, The, 454
Bible, Wiclif's translation of, 50, 87–92; influence of language, 87; early English versions of, 90; Purvey's revision, 91; MSS. of Wiclif's, 92; Tindale's translation of, 101, 114–18; the Mazarine, 102; translation officially ordered, 117; Coverdale's version, 117; the Authorized Version, 118; and Milton, 235; and Cowper, 373; influence on Ruskin, 524
"Bickerstaff, Isaac," 267, 268, 271, 272, 274
Big-endian controversy, the, 311
Biographia Literaria, Coleridge's, 403, 459
Biscop, Benedict, 40, 41
Black Dwarf, The, 454
Blackwood's Magazine and Keats' *Endymion*, 437; publishes George Eliot's first fiction, 508
Blake, William, 319
Blenheim, Battle of, celebrated by Addison, 273
Blot in the Scutcheon, A, 549
Blount, Edward, on *Euphues*, 124
Bodenham, John, 174
Boileau, Pope's indebtedness to, 285
Bolingbroke, Lord, and Pope, 288, 289; letter from Swift to, 307
Bolton, Edmund, 174
Boswell, James, and "The Club," 339; his *Life of Johnson*, 339; on Goldsmith, 345; reports a story of Gibbon and Johnson, 354
Bourgogne, Jean de, 94
Bowles, William Lisle, influence on Coleridge, 399
Brawne, Fanny, and Keats, 438
Brazen head, the Marvellous, 140–41
Breck, Alan, in *Kidnapped*, 567
Bretigny, Treaty of, Chaucer released on, 80
Breton, Nicholas, and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174
Bridal of Triermain, The, 453

Bride of Abydos, The, 415, 416
Bride of Lammermoor, The, 454
British Commerce, Addison on, 280
Brobdingnag, A Voyage to, 312
Brontë, Anne, 491, 494, 496, 500
Brontë, Charlotte, on *Pride and Prejudice*, 446; on Thackeray, 476; life and works, 490–501; early life, 490–93; literary aspirations discouraged by Southey, 494; goes to Brussels, 494; poems published, 495; manner of working, 497; *Jane Eyre* published, 498; attacks on its morality, 499; visits London, 500; marriage, death, 501
Brontë, Branwell, 491, 494, 495, 496, 497, 500
Brontë, Emily, 492, 495, 496, 500
Brooke, Stopford, on Hooker, 189
Brother and Sister Sonnets, 503
Brotherhood Club, the, 306
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, 550; early years, 550; poems, and Browning's admiration, 551; their marriage, 552; in Italy, 553; death, 554
Browning, Robert, life and works, 544–55; early admiration for Shelley, 544; and Keats, 545; early publications, his "obscurity," 546–47; *Bells and Pomegranates*, 548–50; is given Miss Barrett's poetry to read, 551; meets, and marries, her, 552; in Italy, 553; death of Mrs. Browning, 554; return to England, later work, fame, death, 555
Buccleuch, Duchess of, and Sir Walter Scott, 451
Buckingham, Duke of, 251
Bungay, Friar, *see Friar Bacon*
Bunyan, John, 255–64
Burbage, Richard, 169
Burke, Edmund, and "The Club," 339, 349; and Fanny Burney's *Evelina*, 370
Burleigh, Lord, *see* Cecil, William
Burney, Dr., 363; his *History of Music*, 366, 367; reads *Evelina*, 369
Burney, Fanny, 362–71; youth, 362; her writing discouraged, 364; the first draft of *Evelina*, 364; her diary, 365, *Evelina*, 366–70; attempt to find a publisher, 367; completion and publication, 368; appointment in the Royal Household, marriage, *Camilla*, 370, 440; death, 371; influence on Jane Austen, 441
Burns, Robert, life and works, 384–94; hard upbringing, 384; education and reading, 385; his first songs, 386; life at Irvine, 387; attacks on the Church, 388; *Cottar's Saturday Night*, 388; at Mossgiel, Jean Armour, 389; intends to emigrate, publication of *Poems*, goes to Edinburgh, 390; and Scott, personal description of, 2nd edition of *Poems*, 391; marriage, dissipation, at Ellisland, 392; death, 394; and Nature, 398
But, John, 68 *n*
Button's coffee-house, 283
Byron, George Gordon Noel, Lord, life and works, 412–29; early years, 412, 414; travels, 415; success, 415; his poses of melancholy imitated, 416; unhappy marriage, 416; leaves England finally, 417; joins Shelley in Switzerland, 418; dissipations, 421; joined by Shelley, 422; at Leghorn, yachting, 427; at the cremation of Shelley, 428; and the Greek War, 429; death, 429

CABOT, Sebastian, 181, 183, 185
Cædmon, 27–32; vision of, 28; his *Genesis*, 29, 31, 90; influences Cynewulf, 34
Cæsar's *Commentaries*, Mandeville's indebtedness to, 97
Calvin, 187
Camelot, 64
Camilla, 370, 440, 441
Campaign, The, 273
Campion, Thomas, 178
Canterbury Tales, The, 75, 76, 79; Chaucer begins the writing of, 83, 85; framework and tone, 84; MSS. of, 85; printed by Caxton, 85, 182; comparison with *The Faerie Queene*, 145; and the *Tale of Gamelyn*, 164

Carew, Thomas, 222
Carlyle, Thomas, contributes to the *London Magazine*, 457; life and works, 512–22; reviews and magazine work, 513; his "terrible earnestness," 515; on his own life, 517, 518, 519; a literary lion, 521; his *Reminiscences*, death, 522; compared with Ruskin, 523; on Tennyson, 536, 537; and Browning's *Sordello*, 546; and philistinism, 561
Catriona, by Stevenson, 570
Castaway, The, by Cowper, 383
Castle Dangerous, 455
Castle of Indolence, The, 318
Cato, Addison's tragedy, 281; Pope writes prologue to, 284
Cavalier Tunes, by Browning, 548; quoted, 549
Caxton, William, prints the *Canterbury Tales*, 85; his printing, 102
Cecil, William, Lord Burleigh, 120, 121, 123, 197, 198
Cecilia, by Fanny Burney, 370; its influence on Jane Austen, 442
Cenci, The, by Shelley, 425
Chancellor, Richard, 181
Chapman, George, collaborates with Jonson and Marston, 206; Keats' sonnet on his *Homer*, 432
Charity, by Cowper, 378
Charlemagne, Romance of, 49
Charles II, and Dryden, 249
Charterhouse, and Thackeray, 471, 472, 476
Chatterton, Thomas, 319
Chaucer, Geoffrey, 49, 75–86; compared with earlier authors and writings, 75; French influence on, 75, 81; Italian influence on, 81, 82; in Italy, 81; Petrarch, 81; marriage, 82; money troubles, 83; his wife's death, 83; begins the *Canterbury Tales*, 83; official appointments and pension, 83; portrait of himself, 84; Caxton's edition of, 85, 102; his son, 85; estimation of, 86; comparison with Spenser, 145; *Tale of Gamelyn* wrongly attributed to, 164; modernized versions by Dryden, 254; and Nature, 316
Chaucer, John, 76, 77
Chelsea, Sir Thomas More and, 106
Chester cycle of miracle-plays, 51
Chesterfield, Lord, and Johnson's *Dictionary*, 335, 337
Childe Harold, 415, 419, 420, 433, 453
Child's coffee-house, 267
Child's Garden of Verses, A, 567
Christ's Hospital, Coleridge and Lamb at, 399, 458
Christabel, by Coleridge, 406, 409; Scott influenced by, 451
Christian Hero, The, 270
Christian interpolations in *Beowulf*, 22; in the Exeter Book, 34
Christian Year, The, 557
Christianity introduced into Northumbria, 26
Chronica Majora, The, 53–60
Chronicle, the English, see *English Chronicle*
Chronicle plays, Shakespeare's, 162
Chronicles of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, 54
Church, the, in the late Middle Ages, 88; George Herbert and the, 217; and Milton, 236; Bunyan and the, 259
Church, plays performed in, 50
Church, Dean, on Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, 201
Church Porch, The, 218
Citizen of the World, The, 348
Clarence, Duchess of, Chaucer a member of her household, 79, 80
Clarissa Harlowe, 332
Clarke, Charles Cowden, and Keats, 430, 431
Classical drama, and Ben Jonson, 206, 207
Cleanness, 63, 65; its author, 67
Cleobury Mortimer, 68
Clerk of Oxenforde, the, in *The Canterbury Tales*, 79, 82
Clothes, the Philosophy of (Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*), 516–22
Cloud, The, by Shelley, 426
Clough, Arthur Hugh, 558
"Club, The," 339, 349, 353, 354
"Cockney School, The," 430, 433, 437
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, life and works, 397–411; early years, 398–400; friendship with Wordsworth,

402, 404; enlists, meets Southey, the "Pantisocrasy," 402; effect of French Revolution on, 402, 403; marriage, literary work, 403; settles at Nether Stowey, description of by Dorothy Wordsworth, 404; the *Lyrical Ballads*, 404–10; at Göttingen, 409; death, 410; attacked by Byron, 414; and Lamb, 458, 461, 467
Colet, John, 100, 101; founds St. Paul's School, 107, 109
Colin Clout's Come Home Again, 147
Colin Clout's Mournful Ditty for the Death of Astrophel, 143, 174
Collar, The, 220
Collins, William, a follower of Thomson, 318; poems of, 319
Colombe's Birthday, 549
Columba, 27
Columbus and the Renaissance, 99, 181
Comedy of Errors, The, 156, 162
Coming of Arthur, The, by Tennyson, 542
Common, Dol, in *The Alchemist*, 208–10
Common Prayer, Book of, 187
Complaint of Deor, The, 35
Compleat Angler, The, quotation from, 220
Comte de Gabalis, Le, Pope's indebtedness to, 285
Comus, by Milton, 237, 255
Condell, Henry, 169, 171
Conduct of the Allies, The, 305
Congreve, William, 231
Conscious Lovers, The, Steele's comedy, 282
Constable, Henry, 174
Constantinople, capture of, and the Renaissance, 100
Contarine, Rev. Thomas, and Goldsmith, 343, 344
Content, by Robert Greene, 179
Conversation, by Cowper, 378
Copernicus, and the Renaissance, 99
Cornhill, Langland lives in, 72, 82
Cornhill Magazine, Thackeray editor of, 477
Cornhill to Grand Cairo, Notes of a Journey from, 473
Corsair, The, 415, 416, 433
Cottar's Saturday Night, The, 388
Cotton, Sir Robert Bruce, 24
Cottonian MSS., the, 24, 64
Count Robert of Paris, 455
Courts of love of the fourteenth century, 81
Coventry cycle of miracle-plays, 51
Coverdale, Miles, 117
Coverley, Sir Roger de, 275, 277, 278, 316; compared with Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, 350
Cowan's Bridge, the Brontës at school at, 491
Cowley, Abraham, an effect of Puritanism upon, 196, 222
Cowper, William, a follower of Thomson, 318; *The Task*, 319; life and works, 372–83; mental disorder, 372, 377, 383; at Huntingdon, 372–75; and the Unwins, 374; and John Newton, 376–78; at Olney, 376–82; tame hares, 378; takes up poetry, improved health, 378; and Lady Austen, 379; *John Gilpin*, 379; leads revolt against school of Pope, 381; removes to Weston, 382; death, 383; and Nature, 398
Craigenputtock, 512–21
Cranmer, George, 188
Cranmer, Thomas, 187
Crashaw, Richard, and Anglicanism, 195, 221, 222
Crisp, "Daddy," Fanny Burney's friend, 363, 365, 367, 369
Crist, by Cynewulf, 36
Cromwell, poem by Matthew Arnold on, 558
Crossing the Bar, 543
Cruising Voyage Round the World, A, by Capt. Rogers, 293
Culture and Anarchy, 560–63
Cup, The, by Tennyson, 543
Cuthbert, his account of Bede's last days, 43
Cymbeline, 169
Cynewulf, 34, 35–37
Cynthia's Revels, 206

Daniel Deronda, 510, 511
Danish invasion of Britain, 16, 47
Dapper, in *The Alchemist*, 208
Dark Ladie, The, by Coleridge, 406

David Copperfield, 479, 480–88
Davys, John, 181
Day Dream, The, by Tennyson, 535
De Augmentis, Bacon's, 204
Dean Prior, Herrick at, 224; his departure from, 229; and return to, 230
Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, The, 359–61
Defoe, Daniel, 293–99; early years, 294, 295; pilloried, 295; Swift and, 296; *Robinson Crusoe*, 297–99; *Serious Reflections*, 298–99; death, 299; in Harley's pay, 304
Dekker, Thomas, and Ben Jonson, 206
Deor, The Complaint of, 35
De Quincey, Thomas, contributes to *The London Magazine*, 457
Deserted Village, The, 353
Devereux, Penelope, *see* Rich, Penelope
Devil Tavern, the, 212
Deyverdun, Gibbon living with, 359
Dickens, Charles, 471; popularity, 473; life and works, 479–89; novels, 479; theatrical work, 479; early life, 481–82; his reading, 481; at the blacking warehouse, 483; hardships, 484; first published writing, 486; in love, 487; characters drawn from humble life, 488; readings in America, 489; death, 489; on George Eliot, 509
Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers, The, 102
Dictionary of the English Language, Dr. Johnson's, 334–37; payment for, 335; some definitions, 335, 336; the preface, 335–36
Dido of Carthage, 138
Dingley, Rebecca, 300, 303, 306, 307, 308
Diodati, Charles, letter from Milton to, 238
Discourse of a Discoverie, by Gilbert, 182, 186
Discovery, the Age of, 180–86
Distaff, Jenny, 272
Divers Voyages, by Hakluyt, 184
Divine Weeks, The, influence on Milton, 235
Dr. Faustus, 133–38, 187
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, 567
Dodsley, Robert, and Johnson's *Dictionary*, 334; declines Fanny Burney's *Evelina*, 367
Dombey and Son, 475, 479
Dora, by Tennyson, 535
Drake, Sir Francis, 181, 185
Drama, the early beginnings of, 50; rise of the Elizabethan, 135; of the Restoration, 231
Dramatic Romances and Lyrics, by Browning, 549
Dramatis Personæ, by Browning, 555
Dramatists, Elizabethan, their manner of life, 134–35, 160
Drapier's Letters, 312
Drayton, Michael, visits Shakespeare at Stratford, 169; and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174, 176
Dream Children, by Lamb, 460
Dream of Fair Women, The, 534
Drugger, Abel, in *The Alchemist*, 209–10
Dryden, John, 247–54; early work, 247; Absalom and Achitophel, 248–54; relations with Charles II, 249; *The Medal*, 252; the literary dictator, 253; later poems, death, 254; and the Augustan Age, 265; Dr. Johnson on, 341; reaction against school of, 414
Du Bartas, his *Divine Weeks*, 235
Dunciad, The, 253, 286
Dunstable, early plays at, 51
Dunstan, 16
Dyer, Sir Edward, 129, 174

EAST INDIA HOUSE, the, Charles Lamb at, 460, 464; retirement from, 465
Eastward Hoe! 206
Ecclesiastical History, Bede's, 39–44; quoted, 27, 53
Ecclesiastical Polity, The Laws of, 187–93; its effect on Anglicanism, 195
Edinburgh, Burns at, 390–91
Edinburgh Review, The, and Keats' *Endymion*, 438; and Lamb's *John Woodvil*, 464; on Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, 529
Edinburgh University, Carlyle's account of life at, 518
Edmund, in *King Lear*, 169
Edward II, by Marlowe, 138

Edwin Drood, The Mystery of, 489
Eikon Basilike, 223
Elegy written in a Country Churchyard, 319
Elinor and Marianne, 443
Eliot, George, life and works, 502–11; slow literary growth, 502; characteristics, 503, 510; schooling, 504; her reading, 505; life in Coventry, translation of Strauss's *Life of Christ*, travel, 506; work on the *Westminster Review*, literary friendships, 507; friendship with G. H. Lewes, 507; her first fiction, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 508; later works, 510–11; death, 511
Elizabeth, Queen, 101, 121, 123; her place in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, 147; pensions Spenser, 148
Ellwood, Thomas, 246
Emerson, R. W., and Carlyle, 521
Emma, by Jane Austen, 447
Endymion, by Keats, 433–38; story of, 435; Keats' *Preface* to, 436; hostile reviews, 437
England's Helicon, 172–79
English and Norman, conflict between the languages, 49
English Bards and Scotch reviewers, 414
English Chronicle, The, 45–48, 53, 54
English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century, 477
Englishman, The, 281; and Alexander Selkirk, 293
Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe, 347, 348
Epistles, Pope's, 292
Epithalamium, Spenser's, 152
Erasmus, and Sir Thomas More, 105, 107; influence on Tindale, 114
Esmond, 477
Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature, 357
Essay, rise of the modern, 395
Essay on Man, 289–92; some quotations from, 291
Essay upon Criticism, 283
Essays, Bacon's, 199, 204
Essays of Elia, 457–61; 464
Essex, Earl of, 121, 128, 129, 147
Etherege, Sir George, 278
Eudosia, by Ruskin, 524
Euganean Hills, Lines written among the, 422, 424
Euphues, 119–26; publication, and account of, 122; characteristics of, 123; its reception, 123; influence of, 124–25; and *Love's Labour's Lost*, 164
Euphues and his England, 123
Euphues and his Ephœbus, 122
Evans, Sir Hugh, in the *Merry Wives*, 156
Evans, Mary Ann, *see* Eliot, George
Eve of St. Agnes, The, by Keats, 438
Eve of St. John, The, by Scott, 450
Evelina, by Fanny Burney, 366–70; early draft, 364; attempts to find a publisher, 367; completion and publication, 368
Every Man in His Humour, 205; quoted, 207
Every Man out of His Humour, 121, 124, 206
Excursion, The, by Wordsworth, 410, 433
Exeter Book, the, 33–38; Christian poems in, 35
Expostulation, by Cowper, 378

FACE, in *The Alchemist*, 208–10
Faerie Queene, The, 143–53; its beginning, 144; its scheme, 146, 149; Books I–III finished in Ireland, 147; and published in England, 149; the story of Book I, 149–52; Books III–VI written, 152; its dedication, 197; influence on Milton, 235; compared with *Pilgrim's Progress*, 261, 264; indebtedness of Keats to, 432
Fair Maid of Perth, The, 455
Falcon, The, by Tennyson, 543
Fall of Robespierre, The, 403
Farringford, Tennyson's life at, 538–39
Fashions in Mourning, by Steele, 278
Fastidious Brisk, in *Every Man Out of His Humour*, 121, 124
Faust legend, the, see *Dr. Faustus*
Felix Holt, 511
Fermor, Arabella, and *The Rape of the Lock*, 284
Ferrar, Nicholas, 221
Field, Richard, 159
Fielding, Henry, 328–32; parodies

Pamela in *Joseph Andrews*, 329–32; *Tom Jones*, *Amelia*, 332; death, 332; woman imitators, 364
First Folio, the, 171; Jonson's lines in, 211
First Impressions, Jane Austen's early work, 441, 442
Fitzgerald, Edward, friendship with Thackeray, 472; and Tennyson, 535, 536, 537
Flight of the Duchess, The, 549
Flutter, Sir Fopling, 278
Fool, the, in Elizabethan drama, 137, 169
Forster, John, 480, 486
Fortunes of Nigel, The, 484
Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, 264
Fraser's Magazine, Thackeray writes for, 473; and Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, 521
Frederick the Great, by Carlyle, 522
Freeman, E. A., on Gibbon, 360
Freeport, Sir Andrew, 275
French influence on Chaucer, 75, 81, 84
French Revolution, its effect on English literature, 395; on Wordsworth, 400; Carlyle's book on the, 521
Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, 140–42
Friendship, Addison's essay on, 279
Frobisher, Martin, 181, 182, 185
Froude, J. A., on the Authorized Version of the Bible, 118; on Hakluyt's *Voyages*, 184; and the Tractarian Movement, 557
Fuller, Thomas, on Hooker, 189; on Shakespeare and Jonson, 212

Gamelyn, The Tale of, 164
Garden, The, by Cowper, 381
Gardener's Daughter, The, by Tennyson, 535
Gareth and Lynette, by Tennyson, 542
Garrick, David, travels to London with Johnson, 333; produces his *Irene*, 338; and "The Club," 339; and the Burneys, 366
Gaskell, Mrs., on the Brontës, 493
Gawayne, Sir, and the Green Knight, 63–65; its author, 66–67; 79
Gay, John, 309
Genesis, Cædmon's paraphrase, 29, 31
Geraint and Enid, by Tennyson, 541
Giaour, The, 415
Gibbon, Edward, and "The Club," 339, 354, 355; life and works, 354–61; compared with Dr. Johnson, 355; his *Autobiography*, quotations from, 355, 356, 357; at Oxford, and Lausanne, 356; *Essai sur l'Etude de la Littérature*, 357; in Rome, 357; *The Decline and Fall*, 357–61; friendship with Deyverdun, 359–60; accuracy of his work, 360; settles in England, 361; death, 361
Gilbert, Sir Humphrey, 181, 182, 185
Giles, Peter, 110
Gleemen, Anglo-Saxon, 34
Globe Theatre, the, 167
Gloucester, Duke of, and Chaucer, 83
Godwin, Mary, 418
Golden Legend, The, 102
Goldsmith, Oliver, his characters and Fielding's, 329; and "The Club," 339; life and works, 343–53; early years, 343; University life, 344; leaves Ireland, travel, settles in London, 345; his struggles for a livelihood, 346–48; established as a writer, 348; *Vicar of Wakefield, The*, 349–53; later work, death, 353
Gollancz, Israel, quoted on *Pearl*, 63
Goneril, in *King Lear*, 169
Good Natured Man, The, 353
Gordon, Margaret, and Carlyle, 518
Gosse, Edmund, on Herrick's *Hesperides*, 223
Grace Abounding, 259
Gray, Thomas, influenced by Thomson, 318; poems of, 319
Great Expectations, 488
Great Hoggarty Diamond, The, 471, 473
Great Instauration, The, 198
Greatest Birth of Time, The, 198
Grecian coffee-house, the, 267, 271
Greek literature, and the Renaissance, 91, 99, 100, 104
Greene, Robert, influenced by Lyly, 124, 134, 139–42; his *Groatsworth of Wit*, 139; dissolute life, 139; his plays, 139; death and character, 142; jealousy of Shakespeare,

161, 206; his possible share in *Henry VI*, 162; his lyrics, 173; and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174; his *Content*, 179
Greville, Fulke, 129
Grey de Wilton, Lord, Spenser secretary to, 143
Griselda, Chaucer's story of, 81
Groatsworth of Wit, A, 139; its attack on Shakespeare quoted, 161
Grocyn, William, 100, 107
Grub Street, 321
Guardian, The, 281; Pope writes for, 284
Guinevere, by Tennyson, 541
Gulliver's Travels, 309–12; 314; probable indebtedness to *Robinson Crusoe*, 310
Gutenburg, John, 102
Guy Mannering, 454

HAKLUYT, Richard, 180–86
Hall, Dr. John, 169
Hall, Susannah, 169
Hallam, Arthur, 534
Hamlet, 168
Harold, by Tennyson, 543
Harrington, James, influenced by Sir Thomas More, 153
Harvey, Gabriel, on John Lyly, 120; on Robert Greene, 124; *The Faerie Queene* submitted to, 144
Hathaway, Ann, 157, 158
Hawkins, Sir John, 181, 182
Hawkins, Sir Richard, 182, 185
Haworth, the Brontës at, 490, 493
Hazlitt, William, on *The Rape of the Lock*, 286; and Leigh Hunt, 430; contributes to the *London Magazine*, 457; and Lamb, 465
Heart of Midlothian, The, 454
Héger, Mons., 494, 495
Heminge, John, 169, 171
Henry III, and the *Chronicle* of Matthew Paris, 55
Henry IV, Shakespeare's, 162
Henry V, Shakespeare's, 162
Henry VI, Shakespeare's furbishing up of, 161–62
Henry VII, History of, 199, 204
Henry VIII, and Sir Thomas More, 106, 108
Herbert, George, and Anglicanism, 195; life and works, 215–21; compared with Herrick, 227
Hereford, Nicholas, 90
Heroines, Shakespeare's, 166, 170
Herrick, Robert, and Anglicanism, 195; on *The Alchemist*, 211; and Ben Jonson, 212, 223, 229; during the Civil War, 214; life and works, 222–30; compared with Herbert, 227
Hesketh, Lady, and Cowper, 382
Hesperides, The, 223–30
Highland Mary, 389, 393
Hild, Abbess, 26
Hind and the Panther, The, 254
Hints from Horace, by Byron, 415
History of German Literature, by Carlyle, 516
History of Sir Charles Grandison, The, 332
Hobbinol's Ditty, 174
Holinshed's *Chronicle*, Shakespeare's indebtedness to, 160
Holofernes, 124, 156
Holy City, The, by Bunyan, 259, 263
Holy Fair, The, by Burns, 388
Holy Grail, The, by Tennyson, 542
Holy Willie's Prayer, 388
Home Thoughts from Abroad, 549
Homer, Pope's translation of, 286, 306; Cowper's translation of, 383
Honeycomb, Will, 275
Hooker, Richard, 187–93
Hope, by Cowper, 378
Horner, Gilpin, 450, 451
Horton, Milton at, 237
Hours of Idleness, 414
House of Fame, Chaucer's, 83
Household Words, 480
Houyhnhnms, A Voyage to the, 313
How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix, 549
Hughes, John, 278, 279
Hughes, Thomas, 557
Hume, David, and Gibbon, 358
"Humour," its Elizabethan sense, 207
Hunt, Leigh, and Shelley, 428; the "Cockney School," 430, 437; and Keats, 431, 432, 433; and Lamb, 465
Huxley, Thomas, on the Bible, 101
Hyperion, by Keats, 438
Hythloday, Ralph, 110

Idiot Boy, The, by Wordsworth, 407
Idylls of the King, The, 535, 540
Iliad, The, Pope's translation of, 286
Illustrations, account of those by Matthew Paris, 59
Il Penseroso, 214, 237
Imogen, in *Cymbeline*, 170
In Memoriam, by Tennyson, 534, 538; reference to, 558
Instauratio Magna, see *Great Instauration*
Ireland, Spenser's life in, 143
Irene, Johnson's tragedy, 333, 338
Irish Church, the, influence on English literature, 40
Isabella, by Keats, 438
Italian influence, on Chaucer, 81, 82, 84; on English poetry at the time of the Renaissance, 100, 101, 129
Italy, and the Renaissance, 100
Ivanhoe, 454

JAMES I, his scholarly reputation, 200, 202; and Jonson, 206
Jane Eyre, 491, 498–500
Janet's Repentance, 510
Jarrow, monastery at, 40
Jeffrey, Lord, and Carlyle, 515, 516, 520
Jesus Christ, typified in Piers Plowman, 73
Jew of Malta, The, 138
Jewel, Bishop, 188
John Anderson my Jo, John, 393
John of Gaunt, and Chaucer, 83; and Wiclif, 89
John Gilpin, 329
John Inglesant, 221
John Woodvil, 464
Johnson, Esther ("Stella"), and Swift, 301; description of, 302; at Laracor, 303; letters from Swift to, 304, 305, 306–8; in Dublin, 308; meets "Vanessa," 309; last days of, 313; death of, 314
Johnson, Dr. Samuel, on *King Lear*, 168; on Pope, 290, 291; and Thomson, 316; on Richardson's *Pamela*, 326; life and works 333–42; early days in London, 334; the *Dictionary*, 334–37; letter to Lord Chesterfield, 337; his wife, 338; fame achieved, 338; personal description of, 338–39; *Rasselas*, 339; pensioned, 339; *Lives of the Poets*, 340–41; critical canons, 340–41; friendship with Goldsmith, 349, 353; and Gibbon, 354–55; on Fanny Burney's *Evelina*, 369
Jonathan's coffee-house, 268
Jonson, Ben, satirizes Lyly, 121, 124; visits Shakespeare at Stratford, 169; effect of Renaissance on, 195; plays and life, 205–13; compared with Shakespeare, 205, 212; duel with Gabriel Spencer, 205; relations with James I, 206; characteristics of his work, 207; friendship with Shakespeare, 211; and Herrick, 212, 223, 229; his "sons," 212; death, 213
Joseph Andrews, 328–32; compared with Goldsmith's *Vicar*, 350
Juliana, 37
Julius Cæsar, 167
Junian MS., the, 30
Jusserand, Professor, on *Piers Plowman*, 68 *n*

KASTRIL, in *The Alchemist*, 210
Keats, John, and Shelley's *Adonais*, 427; life and works, 431–39; early years, 431; and Shelley, 432; gives up medicine for poetry, first volume of poems published, 432; in the Isle of Wight, 433; *Endymion*, 433–38; at Hampstead, 434; Shelley's invitation declined, 435; tour in Scotland, 437; and the reviewers, 438; failing health, 438; death at Rome, 439; contributes to the *London Magazine*, 457; Browning's admiration for, 545, 546
Keble, John, 557
Kenilworth, the revels at, 128, 159
Kenilworth, by Scott, 454
Kent, Duke of, in *King Lear*, 169
Kenyon, John, and the Brownings, 550, 551, 554
Kidnapped, by R. L. Stevenson, 567–68
Kilcolman, Spenser's Irish home, 143, 152; destroyed by rebels, 153
Kilmarnock edition of Burns' poems, 390

INDEX

King John, Shakespeare's, 162, 163
King Lear, 168–69
King Victor and King Charles, by Browning, 548
Kingsley, Charles, on *Euphues*, 119; on the Elizabethan seamen, 184; and the Working Men's Institute, 530
Knighte's Tale, Chaucer's, 81
Kyd, Thomas, 134

L'Allegro, 214, 237
Lady Geraldine's Courtship, 551
Lady of the Lake, The, 453
"Lake Poets, The," 411, 433
Lamb, Charles, on Sir Wm. Temple's style, 302; at Christ's Hospital, 399, 458; on Coleridge, 399, 458, 467; visits Coleridge at Nether Stowey, 404; and Leigh Hunt, 430; life and works, 457–67; early years, 457–59; office life, 460; intervals of madness, 461; his reading, 463; writes jokes, 463; poems and stories, 464; literary friendships, 465; easier circumstances, removal to Islington, 465; death, 467
Lamb, Mary, 404, 460–63, 465–67
Lamia, by Keats, 438
Lanfranc, Archbishop, 58
Langland, William, 68, 74, 76; work compared with Chaucer's, 75; and Chaucer, 80; compared with Sir Thomas More, 104
Laputa, A Voyage to, 313
Lara, by Byron, 415, 416
Last Tournament, The, by Tennyson, 542
Latimer, Hugh, compared with Matthew Paris, 56
Lay of the Last Minstrel, The, 450, 452
Lee, Sir Sidney, on Shakespeare, 163, 211
Legend of Montrose, The, 454
Leicester, Earl of, 121; Sidney's uncle, 127
Leofric, Bishop, and the Exeter Book, 33
Letter to Maria Gisborne, by Shelley, 431
Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, by Carlyle, 522
Lewes, George Henry, and George Eliot, 507
Liberal, The, a projected newspaper by Byron and Leigh Hunt, 428
Life and Death of Mr. Badman, The, 263
Life of Napoleon, by Scott, 455
Life of Schiller, by Carlyle, 512
Lilliput, A Voyage to, 311
Lilley (or Lyly), William, 107, 191, 155
Linacre, Thomas, 100, 107
Lintot's Miscellany, 285
Lissoy, the home of Goldsmith, 343, 347
Litany, by Herrick, 228
Little Dorrit, 487
Lives of the Poets, The, by Johnson, 340–41
Lockhart, John Gibson, and the critique on *Endymion*, 437; on Scott, 449, 452
Locksley Hall, by Tennyson, 537
Lodge, Thomas, indebtedness of Shakespeare to, 164; his lyrics, 173; and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174, 177
Lollards, the, 89, 92, 114
London, its life in Chaucer's day, 77–78
London, poem by Johnson, 334
London Gazette, The, Steele becomes editor, 270
London Magazine, The, 457
Long Will, 80
Lord of Burleigh, The, by Tennyson, 535
Lord of the Isles, The, 454
Loss of the Royal George, The, by Cowper, 383
Love's Labour's Lost, and Euphuism, 124, 164; Latin sentences in, 156; period of its writing, 162; song from in *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174
Lovel the Widower, 477
Lovelace, Richard, 195, 214, 222
Lovewit, in *The Alchemist*, 208–10
Lucrece, 163
Lucy, by Wordsworth, 409
Lucy Gray, by Wordsworth, 409
Lucy, Sir Thomas, 158, 159
Luria, by Browning, 549
Luther, and the Renaissance writers, 101; defies the Pope, 112

Lutrin, Le, Pope's indebtedness to, 285
Lutterworth, Wiclif at, 89
Lycidas, by Milton, 237; Dr. Johnson's criticism of, 340; referred to, 558
Lydgate, John, Caxton's edition of, 102
Lyly, John, 119–26; character of, 120; satirized by Ben Jonson, 121, 124; his influence, 124–25; turns to the drama, 125; his petition to Queen Elizabeth, 126; death, 126; influence on Shakespeare, 163; his lyrics, 173
Lyly, William, *see* Lilley
Lyrical Ballads, 404–10; reception of by the public, 408, 410; the theory enshrined in them, 408; second edition, 410
Lyrics in Elizabethan drama, 173
Lytton, Lord, influenced by Sir Thomas More, 103

MACAULAY, Lord, on Jane Austen, 446
Macbeth, 168
MacFlecknoe, 253
Madden, Sir Frederick, 63
Madrigal, the, 178
Magna Instauratio, see *Great Instauration*
Malvern Priory, 68, 80
Mammon, Sir Epicure, in *The Alchemist*, 209–10
Man of Mode, The, 278
"Mandeville, Sir John," 50; 93–98; the exposure of, 96, 97; referred to, 181
Manly, Professor, on *Piers Plowman*, 68 *n*
Mansfield Park, 444
Manuscripts, method of writing mediæval, 58
Marlowe, Christopher, 134, 135–42; his *Tamburlaine the Great*, 135; *Dr. Faustus*, 136–38; other plays, 138; his bad reputation, 138; death, 139, 162; estimate of, 142; birth, 154; Shakespeare and, 161; his possible share in *Henry VI*, 162; his *Passionate Shepherd*, 176, 187
Marmion, 453
Marston, John, and Ben Jonson, 206
Martin Chuzzlewit, 479
Martineau, Harriet, on *Jane Eyre*, 499
Master of Ballantrae, The, 569
Maud, by Tennyson, 539
Maurice, Frederick Denison, and the Working Men's Institute, 530
Mazarine Bible, the, 102
Measure for Measure, 167
Medal, The, 252
Men and Women, by Browning, 553
Menaphon, Greene's, 124
Mercator, The, trade journal by Defoe, 296
Merchant, the, of *The Canterbury Tales*, 76
Merchant of Venice, The, 167
Merlin and Vivien, by Tennyson, 541
Mermaid Tavern, the, 167, 212, 234
Merry Wives of Windsor, Latin sentences in, 156; allusions to, 159
Metrical romances, 49
Micawber, Mr., 482, 487
Middle Ages, break up of the, 87, 99; compared with the Renaissance, 103–4
Middle English Period, the, 49–52
Middlemarch, 511
Midsummer Night's Dream, 163, 164, 187
Milbanke, Miss, and Byron, 416
Mill on the Floss, The, 503, 510
Milton, John, 30; his style founded on the Bible, 87; an effect of Puritanism upon, 196; and the Civil War, 223; life and works, 233–46; early years, 234; literary influences, 235; goes to Cambridge, 235; breaks with the Church, 236; at Horton, 237; Continental tour, 237; settles in London, 238; pamphlets, 239–40; becomes Latin secretary and engages in controversy with Salmasius, 240; marries Mary Powell, 240; marries Catherine Woodcock, 241; effect of the Restoration on, 241, 242; *Paradise Lost*, 242–46; views on women, 242; his third marriage, 245; payment for *Paradise Lost*, 245; moves to Bunhill Row, death, 246; referred to, 255, 256; a comparison with Pope, 290

Minstrels, Anglo-Saxon, 34; Norman, 61
Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, 448, 449
Miracle-plays, 50; their disappearance, 135
Miranda, in *The Tempest*, 170
Missolonghi, Byron's death at, 429
Mr. Gilfil's Love Story, 510
Mr. H., farce by Lamb, 464
Modern Painters, 526–31, 557
Monasteries, dissolution of the, 24
Monastery, life in an early English, 41
Monastery, The, 454
Monks, as chroniclers, 54
Monthly Review, Goldsmith's work on, 346
Moor Park, Swift at, 300–2
Morality-plays, 51; their disappearance, 135
More, Sir Thomas, 100, 101, 103–13; a reformer, not a revolutionary, 104; his home life, 105–9; Holbein's portrait of, 108; and the Reformation, 112, 114; death, 112; condemns Tindale's translation of the New Testament, 116
Morte d'Arthur, Le, Caxton's edition of, 102; by Tennyson, 535
Mossgiel, Burns' life at, 389
Mowcher, Miss, 488
Much Ado About Nothing, 164
Mutabilitie, by Spenser, 153

NASH, Thomas, influenced by Lyly, 124, 134; on *Henry VI*, 162
Nature, and the poets, 165, 315, 318, 381, 398, 409
Necessity of Atheism, The, by Shelley, 417
Nether Stowey, Coleridge settles at, 404
Newcomes, The, 477
Newdigate Prize, the, won by Ruskin, 526; by Matthew Arnold, 558
Newman, Cardinal, 557
Newton, John, and Cowper, 376–78
New Learning, the, 101; More a disciple of, 109
New Place, Shakespeare buys, 163; life at, 167, 169
Nicholas Nickleby, 479
Noble Numbers, by Herrick, 229
Norman and English, conflict between the languages, 49
Normans, chronicles of the, 53
Northanger Abbey, 443; sold for £10, 444; published, 447
Northumbria, its supremacy, 26, 39
Novel, rise of the modern English, 325; in the early nineteenth century, 395; in the Victorian Age, 467
Novels by Eminent Hands, 473
Novum Organum, Bacon's, 203
Nutting, by Wordsworth, 409

O' a' the airts the wind can blaw, 389
O my love's like a red, red rose, 393
O wert thou in the cauld blast, 393
Oates, Titus, 248, 251
Ode to a Skylark, by Shelley, 426
Ode to the West Wind, 426
Odes, by Keats, 438
Odyssey, The, Pope's translation of, 286
Œnone, by Tennyson, 534
Oh, to be in England, by Browning, 549
Old Curiosity Shop, The, 479
Old Monthly Magazine, The, Dickens' first writing in, 486
Old Mortality, 454
Oldys, William, on Shakespeare, 166
Oliver Twist, 429
Olney, Cowper settles at, 376
On Immortality, Addison's, 278
Ordination, The, by Burns, 388
Orm's *Ormulum*, 90
Ormond, Duke of, 251
Othello, 168
Oxford, Matthew Arnold on, 556, 563

PACOLET, "Bickerstaff's" familiar, 272
Palace of Art, The, 534
Palamon, in Chaucer's *Knighte's Tale*, 81
Pamela, by Richardson, 324–28; parodied by Fielding, 329; compared with Goldsmith's *Vicar*, 350
Pantisocrasy, the, 402
Paracelsus, by Browning, 546
Paradise Lost, its debt to Cædmon, 31, 32; 235, 238, 242–46; payment for, 245; compared with *Pilgrim's Progress*, 261, 263, 264; Addison on, 280

Paradise Regained, 246
Paris, Matthew, 54, 60
Parson Adams, 329; Goldsmith's indebtedness to for his Vicar of Wakefield, 350
Partridge, the almanac-maker, 267
Passions, The, by William Collins, 319
Pastorals, Pope's, 284
Patience, 63, 65; its author, 67
Patronage in literature, 321
Pauline, by Browning, 546
Pearl, 61–64; its author, 66–67; compared with Chaucer's *Prologue*, 75
Peasant Revolt, the, 73
Peele, George, influenced by Lyly, 124, 134; his possible share in *Henry VI*, 162; his lyrics, 173; and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174
Pelleas and Ettare, by Tennyson, 542
Pembroke, Countess of, *see* Sidney, Mary
Pembroke, Earl of, 120
Pendennis, 471, 476
Penshurst, 127, 143
Pepys, Samuel, on *The Alchemist*, 211
Perdita, in *The Winter's Tale*, 170
Peterborough Chronicle, the, 48
Petrarch, Chaucer and, 81
Petre, Lord, and *The Rape of the Lock*, 284
Peveril of the Peak, 454
Philip, by Thackeray, 477
Philistinism, 561–63
Phillips, Edward, 238, 243
Phœnix, The, 37
Physiologus, in the Exeter Book, 38
Pickwick Papers, The, 471; Thackeray wishes to illustrate, 472, 479
Pied Piper of Hamelin, The, 548–49
Piers Plowman, The Vision of, 68–74; compared with Utopia, 104
Pilgrim's Progress, The, 259–64
Pinch, in the *Comedy of Errors*, 156
Pippa Passes, by Browning, 547–48; 549
Pirate, The, 454
Plato, influence on Sir Thomas More, 103, 108
Pliny, Mandeville's indebtedness to, 97
Plowman, Piers, *see* Piers
Plutarch's *Lives*, Shakespeare's indebtedness to, 160
Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, by Tennyson, 534
Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, 495
Poems by Two Brothers (Charles and Alfred Tennyson), 533
" Poet's Corner," beginning of, 85
Poet's Epitaph, The, by Wordsworth, 409
Poet's Song, The, by Tennyson, 537
Poetaster, The, 206
" Poor Priests," Wiclif's, 89
Pope, the, and Wiclif, 89
Pope, Alexander, indebtedness to Dryden, 253; his worship of Dryden, 253, 283; early years, 283; *The Rape of the Lock*, 284–86; quarrel with Addison, 285, 286; *Homer, The Dunciad*, friendship with Swift, 286; at Twickenham, 287; and Bolingbroke, 288, 289; *Essay on Man*, 289–92; accused of atheism, 292; death, 292; and Swift, 306; and the Scriblerus Club, 309; Dr. Johnson on, 341; revolt against his school, 381, 395, 414
Popish Plot, the, 248
Poulter's measure, 176
Powell, Mary, and Milton, 240; death, 241
Poyser, Mrs., 510
Prelude, The, by Wordsworth, 397, 410
Pride and Prejudice, 442; publication of, 444; Charlotte Brontë on, 446
Primrose, Dr., Scott's reference to, 449 (see *Vicar of Wakefield, The*)
Prince Otto, 567
Princess, The, by Tennyson, 538
Principall Navigations, Voiages, &c., by Hakluyt, 180, 184–6
Printing, invention of, 101
Prisoner of Chillon, The, 419
Professor, The, by Charlotte Brontë, 496, 498
Profitable Meditations, by Bunyan, 259
Progress of Error, The, by Cowper, 378
Progress of Poesy, The, by Gray, 319
Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, 75, 84
Prometheus Unbound, by Shelley, 425, 426

Promise of May, The, by Tennyson, 543
Prospero, in *The Tempest*, 170
Prynne, William, on performance of *Dr. Faustus*, 138
Psalms, The, translation of, 90, 91
Puck, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 170
Pulley, The, 219
Punch, Thackeray's connexion with, 473, 478
Puritanism, and literature, 195, 231; and the theatres, 196, 247; and Herrick, 223, 227; and Milton, 233, 234, 236, 255; in the reign of Anne, 268
Purvey, John, 90, 91

Quarterly Review, The, on Keats' *Endymion*, 437; on *Jane Eyre*, 499
Queen Mab, by Shelley, 418
Queen Mary, by Tennyson, 543
Quentin Durward, 454

RALEIGH, Sir Walter, 120; Spenser's letter to, 146; stays with Spenser in Ireland, 147; and the Mermaid Tavern, 167; reference to, 173; and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174, 176, 181
Raleigh, Prof. Sir Walter, on *As You Like It*, 165; on Jane Austen, 446
Rambler, The, 338
Ramsay, Allan, his influence on Burns, 385, 386
Rape of the Lock, The, 284
Rasselas, 339
Reason of Church Government, The, 239
Redgauntlet, 454
Reformation, the, 112, 117
Regan, in *King Lear*, 169
Religio Laici, 254
Religion, and literature, 22, 26–32, 35, 36, 40–44, 49, 67, 69–74, 87–92, 99, 100, 114–18, 187–93, 195, 215–21; *see also* Puritanism
Renaissance, the, and Scholasticism, 88; period of, 99–102; Faust legend and, 133, 136–37; its strength, 187; decline, 195; and Herrick, 223
Requiem, Stevenson's, 571
Restoration, the, and Milton, 241, 242; and Dryden, 247; tone of its literature, 248, 255; effect on Bunyan, 256
Retirement, by Cowper, 378
Return of the Druses, The, 549
Revenge, Ballad of the, 543
Review, The, founded by Defoe, 295
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, and "The Club," 339, 349; and the Burneys, 366
Rich, Penelope, 128, 129, 175
Richard the Redeles, 74
Richard II, Shakespeare's, 162
Richard III, Shakespeare's, and Marlowe's *Edward II*, 138, 162
Richardson, Samuel, 322–32; as a letter-writer, 322, 323; *Pamela*, 324–28; annoyed by parodies of his work, 328, 331; and Oliver Goldsmith, 346; woman imitators, 364; Thackeray on, 474
Riddles, The, in the Exeter Book, 37
Ring and the Book, The, 555
Robertson, William, and Gibbon, 358
Robinson Crusoe, 294, 297–99; *Gulliver's Travels* and, 310
Rob Roy, 454
Rochester, Earl of, 255
Roe Head, the Brontës at, 492, 493
Rogers, Samuel, on Tennyson's poems, 537
Romance, flourishing period of, 61; its decline, 79, 99
Romances, metrical, 49; of the fourteenth century, 79
Romeo and Juliet, 163
Romola, 510, 511
Rood, Cynewulf's *Vision of The*, 36
Roper, William, his *Life of Sir Thomas More*, 105
Rosalind, in *As You Like It*, 165–66, 176
Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacy, 164
Rosamund Gray, 464
Roscommon, Earl of, 255
Rose Theatre, the, 161
Rosicrucian theory, the, and *The Rape of the Lock*, 285
Roundabout Papers, The, 477
Rowe, Nicholas, on Shakespeare, 158, 160
Rowley poems, the, 319

Runic signatures, 37
Ruskin, John, on the Bible, 87; life and works, 523–32; compared with Carlyle, his message, 523; early years, 524; travel, early literary work, 525; championship of Turner, at Oxford, 526; meets Turner, begins *Modern Painters*, 527; the Working Men's Institute, literary friendships, lecturing, 530; his teaching, 531; death, 532; on Tennyson's *Idylls*, 541
Ruth, by Wordsworth, 409

Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton, The, 508, 509
St. Albans, chronicle and chroniclers of, 54
St. Guthlac, The Life of, 37
St. James's coffee-house, 271
St. Paul's School, and Chaucer, 77; founded by Dean Colet, 107; Milton at, 235
St. Ronan's Well, 454
Saintsbury, Professor, on Dryden, 248
Salt, Samuel, and Charles Lamb, 459, 460, 463
Samson Agonistes, 246
Sandys, Edwin, 188
Sandys, George, and Anglicanism, 195
Sartor Resartus, 516–22; its style, 516; contents, 517–19; great difficulty in finding a publisher, 520; appears in *Fraser's Magazine*, 521; Browning's admiration for, 546
Satires, Pope's, 292
Saul, by Browning, 549
Scenes of Clerical Life, 508–11
Scholar Gipsy, The, by Arnold, 556
Schoolmen, and Scholasticism, 88, 136, 140
Scop, the, 34
Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled, 393
Scott, Sir Walter, and Euphuism, 125; and Burns, 390, 391; attacked by Byron, 414; on *Childe Harold*, 420; life and works, 448–56; a collector of ballads, 448; influenced by *Christabel*, 451; definitely adopts literature as a profession, 452; his "hurried frankness," 452; settles at Abbotsford, 453; turns to novel writing, 453; his baronetcy, 454; financial troubles, 455; failing health, 455; death, 456
Scriblerus Club, The, 309
Scriptorium, the monastic, 58
Seafarer, The, 35
Seasons, The, by James Thomson, 318
Sedley, Sir Charles, 255
Sejanus, 206
Selkirk, Alexander, 293, 294, 297; Cowper's poem on, 383
Sellwood, Emily, Lady Tennyson, 538
Sense and Sensibility, 443; publication of, 444
Sentry, Captain, 275
Serious Reflections, by Defoe, 298–99
Seven Lamps of Architecture, The, 530
Shadwell, Thomas, 253
Shaftesbury, Lord, 249, 250, 252
Shakespeare, Hamnet, 163
Shakespeare, John, 154, 155, 157; death of, 167
Shakespeare, Judith, 166, 170
Shakespeare, Susannah, *see* Hall, Susannah
Shakespeare, William, influence of Lyly on, 124; plays of, 154–71; birth, 154; youth and schooling, 155–57; marriage, 157; children, 158; leaves Stratford for London, 158; work at theatres, 159; life as a London actor, 160; Greene's attack on, 161, 206; *Henry VI*, 161–2; chronicle plays, 162; gains goodwill of Southampton, *Venus and Adonis, Lucrece*, income, death of son, buys New Place, 163; *Much Ado, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Love's Labour's Lost, A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 164; and Nature, 165, 316; his girl-heroines, 166; as Adam in *As You Like It*, 166; a man of wealth, death of his parents, 167; under a cloud, *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear*, 168; last years, visitors, *Winter's Tale, Cymbeline, Tempest*, 169; later heroines, his farewell, death, and burial, 170; the First Folio, 171; his lyrics, 173; and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174; the bust at Stratford, 193; and Ben Jonson,

205, 211, 212; acts in Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, 205, and *Sejanus*, 206; godfather to Jonson's child, 212; visits to London, 234; Lamb's *Tales from*, 464
Shallow, Justice, 159
Sharp, Becky, 475
She is a winsome wee thing, 393
She Stoops to Conquer, 353
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, life and works, 413–29; schooldays, 413; his advanced ideas, 417; expelled from Oxford, life in London, 417; unhappy marriage, 418; marries Mary Godwin, 418; in Switzerland with Byron, 418; returns to England, 419; leaves England finally, 421; with Byron, 422; characteristics of his poetry, 422; his lyrics, 422; personal account by Trelawny, 422–24; disagrees with Wordsworth's theory of poetry, 426; at Pisa, 426; admiration for Byron's poetry, 427; yachting, 427; and Leigh Hunt, 428, 430, 431; drowned at sea, 428; meeting with Keats, 432; invitation to Keats' declined, 434; Browning's admiration of, 544, 546
Shelvocke's *Voyages*, suggests *The Ancient Mariner*, 405
Shepheard's Calendar, The, 101, 143, 174
Shepherd's Daffodil, The, 176
Shipman, the, of *The Canterbury Tales*, 76
Shirley, 493, 500
Shortest Way with the Dissenters, The, 295
Shorthouse, J. H., on Caroline religious poets, 214; his *John Inglesant*, 221
Shottery, 158
Sidney, Mary, Countess of Pembroke, 120, 128
Sidney, Sir Philip, 120, 127–32; and the Queen, 128; writes *Arcadia*, 128; *Astrophel*, 129; the fame of his sonnets, 129; indebtedness to French and Latin, 129; death at Arnheim, 132; and the Elizabethan stage, 165; reference to, 173; and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174, 175
Silas Marner, 511
Silent Woman, The, 206
Silver Tassie, The, by Burns, 393
Sir Galahad, by Tennyson, 535
Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight, see *Gawayne*
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere, by Tennyson, 537
Sir Nathaniel, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, 124
Sir Thopas, Chaucer's *Tale of*, 80
Skeat, Professor, on *Piers Plowman*, 68, *n*; on Langland, 72
Smith, Horace, 430, 431
Snob Papers, The, 473
Sofa, The, by Cowper, 380
Song-books, Elizabethan, 172–79
Sonnets, rise of in England, 127, 129
Sonnets, The, of Shakespeare, 163, 197
Sonnets from the Portuguese, by Mrs. Browning, 552
Sordello, by Browning, 546
Soul's Tragedy, A., 549
Southampton, Earl of, and Shakespeare, 163, 197
Southey, Robert, and Coleridge, 402; and Wordsworth, 411; and Lamb, 465; and Charlotte Brontë, 494
Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, by Lamb, 463, 464
Spectator, The, 274–81; Pope writes for, 284; Goldsmith's *Bee* modelled on, 348
Spencer, Gabriel, Jonson's duel with, 205
Spenser, Edmund, 101, 127, 129, 143–53; comparison with Chaucer, 145; his letter to Raleigh, 146; returns to England from Ireland, and is pensioned by Queen Elizabeth, 148; publishes Books I–III of *The Faerie Queene*, 149; its success, 152; finishes Books III–VI, 152; unhappy death in London, 153; reference to, 173; and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174
Spring, by James Thomson, 318
Stanley, Dean, on Hooker, 193
Stanzas written in Dejection near Naples, 425
Steele, Richard, and *The Tatler*, 269,

271–74; early life, 269; dramatic work, and *The London Gazette*, 270; and *The Spectator*, 275, 277–81; *The Conscious Lovers*, 282; death, 282; Pope and, 283; and Alexander Selkirk, 293
"Stella" (Esther Johnson), Swift's letters to, 306–8. *See also* Johnson, Esther
"Stella" (Penelope Rich), Sidney's sonnets to, 129–32
Stephen, Sir Leslie, on Dr. Johnson, 341
Stevenson, Robert Louis, life and works, 565–71; his reading, 565; ill-health, 566, 568; *Kidnapped*, 567–68; leaves England, 568; settles at Vailima, 569; death, 571
Stones of Venice, The, 530
Strafford, by Browning, 546
Stratford-on-Avon, 154; Shakespeare's return to, 166; last years at, 169
Streoneshalh, 26, 27
Struldbrugs, the, 313
Subtle, in *The Alchemist*, 208–10
Suckling, Sir John, 195, 214, 222
Summer, by James Thomson, 318
Surly, Pertinax, in *The Alchemist*, 209
Surrey, Earl of, 100; and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174, 175
Swift, Jonathan, 267; introduces Pope to Bolingbroke, 288; contempt for Defoe, 296; life and works, 300–14; at Moor Park, 300–2; at Laracor, 303; joins the Tories, and settles in London, 303; relations with Harley, 304; disappointments, 305; *Letters to Stella*, 306; Esther Vanhomrigh, 307; appointed Dean of St. Patrick's Dublin, 307; joins the Scriblerus Club, 309; *Gulliver's Travels*, 309–12; *Drapier's Letters*, 312; decay of mental powers, 313; declared to be insane, 314; death, 314
Swiftly walk over the Western Wave, 427
Swinburne, Algernon Charles, on Collins, 319
Symonds, J. A., on *Euphues*, 125
TABARD INN, The, 80
Table Talk, by Cowper, 378
Tale of a Tub, A, 303; Carlyle's indebtedness to, 517
Tale of Two Cities, A, 488
Tales of a Grandfather, 455
Tales from Shakespeare, 464
Talisman, The, 454
Talking Oak, The, by Tennyson, 537
Tam o' Shanter, 393
Tamburlaine the Great, 135, 136, 187
Task, The, by Cowper, 319, 380, 382
Tate, Nahum, 253
Tatler, The, 267–74; respective parts of Steele and Addison, 274
Taylor, Tom, on Thackeray, 478
Tempest, The, 169–70
Temple, Sir William, 300, 302
Temple, The, 216–21
Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, quoted, 61; friendship with Thackeray, 472; life and works, 533–43; childhood, *Poems by Two Brothers*, at Cambridge, 533; and Arthur Hallam, 534; the *Idylls*, and other works, 535, 540–42; and the Carlyles, 536; poems of 1842, 537; pensioned, marriage, becomes Poet Laureate, 538; life at Farringford, 539; dramas, and later works, death, 543
Teufelsdröckh, 516, 517, 518
Thackeray, William Makepeace, life and works, 471–78; education and travel, 472; studies art, 472; desires to illustrate *Pickwick*, 472; as journalist, 473; his attitude towards life, 474; *Vanity Fair*, 475; his pseudonyms, 476; *Jane Eyre* dedicated to, 476; literary triumph, 477; death, 478; on George Eliot, 509
Thanksgiving to God, A, Herrick's, 225
Theatres, the early London, 135; the Elizabethan audience, 137; scenery in Elizabethan, 165; close of the, 196; reopening of, 247
Thomson, James, 316–18, 343
Thopas, Sir, see *Sir Thopas*
Thorn, The, by Wordsworth, 408
Thyrsis, by Arnold, 556, 558–59
Timepiece, The, by Cowper, 380
Tindale, William, his translation of

the Bible, 101, 114–18; goes to the Continent, 115; publication of the New Testament, 116; translation of the Pentateuch, 116; and other Old Testament books, 117; imprisonment and death of, 117
Tintern Abbey, Lines composed above, 408, 409
To Althea from Prison, 214
To Anthea, by Herrick, 228
To a Daisy, by Burns, 389
To Evening, by William Collins, 319
To Mary, by Cowper, 383
To a Mouse, by Burns, 389
To Phyllis the Fair Shepherdess, 177
To Pity, by William Collins, 319
Tom Brown's Schooldays, 557
Tom Jones, 332; compared with Goldsmith's *Vicar*, 350
Tottell's Miscellany, 174
Touchstone, in *As You Like It*, 176
Tractarian Movement, the, and *Tracts for the Times*, 557, 560
Traveller, The, by Goldsmith, 350
Travels of Sir John Mandeville, see *Voiage*
Travers, Walter, his controversy with Hooker, 189
Treasure Island, 566
Trelawny, Captain, on Shelley, 422–24; at Shelley's cremation, 428
Triumph of Life, The, by Shelley, 428
Troilus and Cressida, Shakespeare's, 167
Trollope, Anthony, and Thackeray, 474
Trotwood, Betsey, 486
Troy, Romance of the Siege of, 49
True and False Wit, Addison's, 278
True Declaration of the Troublesome Voyage of Mr. John Hawkins, A, 182
Truth, by Cowper, 378
Tulliver, Maggie, 505
Turner, J. M. W., Ruskin's championship of, 526, 527, 529
Twa Herds, The, by Burns, 388
Twelfth Night, 164
Twickenham, Pope's home at, 287
Two Gentlemen of Verona, The, 162
Two Voices, The, by Tennyson, 537
Tyler, Wat, 73
Tyrwhitt, Thomas, his edition of Chaucer, 86

Ulysses, by Tennyson, 537
Universities, youthful age of students at the, 79
University Wits, the, 124, 134, 135, 139, 161
Unwin, Mrs., and Cowper, 374–83
Ussher, Archbishop, discovers the Cædmon MS., 30
Utopia, 100; 103–13; its inception, 109–10; description of the island, 110–12; its popularity, 112; publication of, 113

Vailima, Stevenson's home at, 569
"Vanessa" (Esther Vanhomrigh), and Swift, 307, 308; meets "Stella," 309; death of, 313
Vanhomrigh, Esther, *see* "Vanessa"
Vanity Fair, 475–76; and Dickens, 479
Vanity of Human Wishes, The, 338
Vaughan, Henry, and Anglicanism, 195, 221
Venus and Adonis, 163
Vicar of Wakefield, The, comparison with Fielding's Parson Adams, 329, 349–52; its publication, 350; compared with *Pamela*, and others, 350; Scott's reference to, 449
Victorian Age in English literature, The, 469
Villette, 495, 501
Virgil's *Æneid*, Caxton's edition of, 102
Virginians, The, 477
Vision of Don Roderick, The, 453
Vision of Piers Plowman, The, see *Piers Plowman*
Voiage and Travail of Sir John Mandeville, The, 50, 93–98; popularity of, 96; the true author of, 97; referred to by Sir Thomas More, 110
Volpone, 206
Vulgate, The, Wiclif's use of, 91

WAKEFIELD cycle of miracle-plays, 51
Waller, Edmund, effect of Puritanism upon, 196, 255
Walpole, Horace, on Pope, 287
Walton, Izaak, on Hooker, 187; on George Herbert, 215, 216, 220, 221
Wanderer, The, 35

INDEX

Wanderer, The, by Fanny Burney, 371
Warburton, William, champions Pope, 292
Watchman, The, Coleridge's projected paper, 403
Watsons, The, 443
Waverley; or, 'tis Sixty Years Since, 453
Waverley Novels, The, 454
We are Seven, 407
Wearmouth, monastery at, 40
Weir of Hermiston, 570
Wells, H. G., influenced by Sir Thomas More, 103
Wendover, Roger, 54, 55
Westminster Review, The, George Eliot and, 507
Westward Ho! 184
Whitby, 26, 27; Synod of, 40
White's coffee-house, 267, 271
Whitgift, Archbishop, 189
Wholesome, Tribulation, in *The Alchemist*, 210
Wiclif, his translation of the Bible, 50, 87–92; his period, 87; life, 88; and the Schoolmen, 88; expelled from Oxford and settles at Lutterworth, 89; death, 91
Widsith, 34
Wild Gallant, The, 247
Wilhelm Meister, Carlyle's translation, 512
Will's coffee-house, 253, 267, 271
William of Boldensele, Mandeville's indebtedness to, 97
William of Shoreham, 90
Willoughby, Hugh, 181
Wimble, Will, 277
Winchester, the Chronicle of, 45–47
Winter, by James Thomson, 316, 317
Winter Evening, Winter Morning Walk, Winter Walk at Noon, The, 381
Winter's Tale, The, 169
With a Donkey in the Cevennes, 566
Wood's Halfpence, 312
Woodcock, Catherine, Milton's second wife, 241
Woodstock, 455
Wootton, John, 174
Wordsworth, Dorothy, 401; description of Coleridge, 404
Wordsworth, William, influenced by Thomson, 318; life and works, 397–411; early years, 397; and Nature, 398; at Oxford, travel, effect of French Revolution on, 400; friendship with Coleridge, 402, 404; the *Lyrical Ballads*, 404–10; in Germany, 409; settles in the Lake Country, 410; marriage, 410; death, 411; attacked by Byron, 414; Shelley disagrees with his poetic theory, 426; and Lamb, 465, 466
Worthies of England, Fuller's, 189
Wuthering Heights, 496, 498
Wyatt, Sir Thomas, 100; and *Tottell's Miscellany*, 174
Wycherley, William, 231, 255; and Pope, 283
Wynkyn de Worde, 102

YAHOOS, The, 314
Yellowplush Papers, The, 473
York cycle of miracle-plays, 51
York, school at, 15

ZUTPHEN, Sidney fatally wounded at, 132

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

4 Apr'65 JS

REC'D LD
MAR 26 '65 -8 PM

10 Oct 65 GP

REC'D LD
SEP 28 '65 -2 PM

LD 21A-60m-4,'64
(E4555s10)476B

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

395353
912
C957
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY